Why WE BELIEVE The BIBLE

HENRY M. KING

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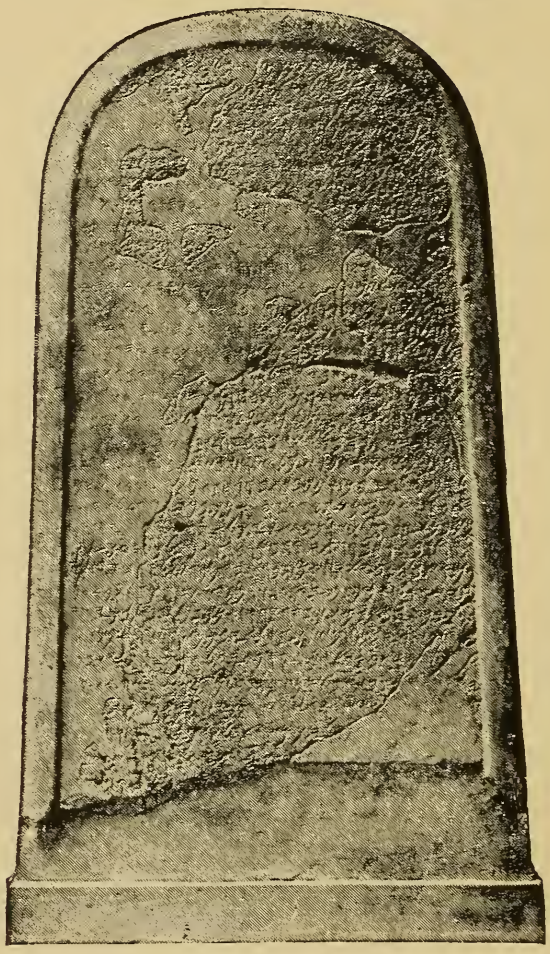

THE "MOABITE STONE." — About B. C. 890.

(Paris, Museum of the Louvre.)

Monument dedicated to the god Kemôsh, by Mesha, king of Moab, to record his victory over the Israelites in the days of Ahab; found at Dibhân in the land of Moab in 1868. The inscription is in the Phœnician character.

Why We Believe The Bible

By HENRY MELVILLE KING

Author of "Our Gospels,"
and "The Messiah in the Psalms."

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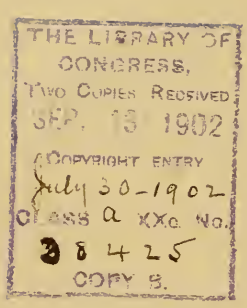

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PREFACE

The method of approach often determines the results of investigation. Mental attitude has much to do with the weight of evidence. Few men are absolutely unbiased. The author frankly confesses that to be compelled to give up faith in the Bible as the authoritative Word of God would be to him an unspeakably distressing calamity. It is the only Book we have that gives to us any satisfying information about God, duty, salvation, and immortality. Every instinct of his soul leads to the desire that the historicity of the Bible may be more and more established, that its trustworthiness may be confirmed, that its inspiration and divine origin may be clearly demonstrated, and that its integrity and authority may be unimpaired. These characteristics render the Bible truly the Word of God.

Faith must have its justification. The peace of credulity cannot long be preserved. Yet the claims of the Bible, its marvellous character

and influence, its prestige, ought to predispose the mind to faith, to protect the Bible against hasty and destructive criticism, and to secure for it the most reverent and careful treatment. The evidences in support of its claims ought to receive the fullest consideration. Adverse criticisms should be carefully scrutinized. To ignore the evidences and welcome the criticisms would be proof of an unfriendly and unrighteous spirit. Reconstruction may be sometimes necessary. It is liable to be rash, and is always attended with danger. To tear down the old house, under the pretence of building a new one with selected material, may be to leave the soul without shelter. He who rashly undermines faith in any part of revelation may be destroying faith in all revelation. The same hand rarely has sufficient skill to be destructive and constructive at the same time. The popular judgment may sometimes err, but it is generally correct when it discriminates between the friends and the enemies of the Bible.

Apologetics has its place in Christian literature. Controversy may be unprofitable. Defence may be necessary. Assaults upon the Bible have always disclosed the strength of its

defences. Its defenders have been a noble army, from Origen until now, and have rendered a service for the truth of inestimable value. Faith in the ultimate triumph of the Word of God is not inconsistent with a prompting to point out its unique characteristics and its convincing confirmations, and to proclaim its marvellous achievements among many nations. Such efforts on the part of the friends of the Bible serve to check the tide of unbelief and strengthen the faith of the timid.

At the present time the Holy Scriptures are exposed to varied hostile attacks. Even some of the friends of the Bible appear to be quite ready to surrender the outposts, with the hope, if not for the purpose, of saving the citadel. New defences for the Bible as a revelation of divine truth seem to be demanded, and in the wonderful providence of God they have been provided. Biblical defences were never so abundant and strong as at the beginning of the twentieth century. The authority and veracity of the Scriptures were never supported by such harmonious and convincing testimony as now.

The century that has just closed has been distinguished as much for its missionary prog-

ress as for its progress in scientific knowledge and human invention, remarkable as that has been. The triumphs of the Christian religion in all lands are its indisputable and ever accumulating credentials. The last century has been called pre-eminently the missionary century, not only in point of courageous and far-reaching effort, but in point of splendid achievement. Moreover, the weight of testimony in favor of the trustworthiness of the Sacred Records, derived in recent years from archæology and unearthed history, has strengthened incalculably the claim of the Bible upon the faith of the scholarship of Christendom, and made it possible to treat the subject of Christian evidences as never before. This testimony bears upon the outward form and historic facts of Revelation, and must be of very special value to those persons who have sought to retain faith in the essential truth of Revelation, while feeling compelled to question the accuracy and truthfulness of its records.

The spirit of Christianity inheres in the recorded facts and promulgated truths of Christianity, and cannot long survive, if they are

denied. The truths of revealed religion are contained in a Sacred Book, comprising the Old and New Testaments, both of which are historic in form and didactic in nature, and those truths will continue to influence the lives, the hopes and the destinies of men so long as reverence for that Book and faith in its records are preserved. The letter without the spirit kills. The spirit without the letter, which is its necessary embodiment and visible expression, soon disappears and is gone, like the fragrance of the flower, like the light of the sun, when flower and sun are taken away.

May this small volume be helpful to the faith of its readers in the divine origin and trustworthiness of the Holy Scriptures, who have not the time or the disposition to make themselves familiar with more elaborate treatises on Christian evidences. H. M. K.

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

THE LIGHT FROM THE MONUMENTS

"Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified; or let them hear, and say, It is truth." (Isaiah 43:9.)

CHAPTER I.

THE LIGHT FROM THE MONUMENTS.

The books of the Old Testament are, or profess to be, largely historical records. They are full of the names of persons, places and events of a remote past. Until a very recent date they were universally believed to contain accurate history, the names of persons who once lived, and of places which had an actual existence, and the record of events as credible and trustworthy as any accepted history recent or remote. Of course, confirmatory evidence of the truthfulness of these Scriptural Records was not at hand. The history of God's ancient people was interwoven with the history of other contemporaneous peoples, who inhabited adjacent territory, and were frequently engaged with it in varied intercourse or in deadly warfare; but the records of other nations had been to such an extent obliterated or lost that little comparison could be made and little support

could be adduced. Ancient history was for the most part Grecian or Roman, and there seemed little likelihood that the vanished past of Egypt, Chaldea, Babylonia and Assyria would ever be brought to light, and made to live again in the detailed accounts of substantial history. Archæology was a study with scanty material and few attractions, and was little pursued.

At that time, a half century or more ago, the spirit of a skeptical destructive criticism, sometimes called "historic," because it assailed the facts of history, and not because it had discovered new historic facts, sprang up and seemed to become infectious. Its method was largely one of denial. It was bold in its assertions, and seemed to be having things pretty much its own way, because the proofs of the things which it denied, on account of their remoteness in the past, seemed to be destroyed or utterly and forever inaccessible.

Classic history was revolutionized, and its heroes, its events, and even its famous cities were surrounded with an atmosphere of suspicion, or relegated to the region of sagas, myths and legends. Herodotus and Berosus, from whom modern historians had been wont

to derive their material, were declared to be little more than romancers, and wholly unworthy of confidence. Nothing was too sacred to be assailed by this destructive criticism. It turned its attention to the books of the Bible, which profess to trace the current of history back a thousand years prior to the earliest authentic history of Greece and Rome, and it looked as if Abraham and Isaac and Jacob would disappear in the misty haze that enveloped Agamemnon and ancient Troy. Indeed, it was boldly asserted that the earlier books of the Old Testament were "the product of a mythical and legendary age, and belonged back in the fogs and mists of antiquity, before the dawn of true and corroborative history." There being known no external testimony to the reality of its persons and events, and to the accuracy of its records, beyond the traditional faith which had prevailed, it was supposed that there was no such testimony in existence. At the beginning of the century there had not been discovered more than a single document or inscription contemporaneous with the Old Testament Scriptures. There were no witnesses which could be summoned in support of these

ancient records. Their genuineness and trustworthiness were confidently challenged, and their friends were unable to make reply. And so the sacred belief of centuries was disputed, what purported to be history and had always been believed to be history, was declared to be fable and imagination, and the old books, it was asserted, were compiled of floating traditions by a late hand, and palmed off by a pious fraud upon the faith of a deluded people.

Of course, these deniers and dissectors undertook to advance arguments in favor of their views, which in the absence of contradictory evidence on the other side were regarded by them as conclusive. And, indeed, if the arguments had been historically true, and no new light had been shed upon the Biblical problems, the Old Testament Scriptures, which were the sacred faith of God's ancient people, which certainly seemed to have had the endorsement of Christ, and which are the real background, and in some true sense the foundation, of New Testament Christianity, might have been set aside as utterly unworthy of our confidence.

How much hostility to the supernatural element in the Old Testament may have influ-

enced the attitude and conduct of these destructive critics, it is not necessary now to consider. It is enough to say that in the judgment of some men the presence of the supernatural, whether in the Old Testament or the New, is to be ascribed solely to the mythical spirit, and must be eliminated before the records can be accepted as substantial and trustworthy history. The naturalistic interpretation of the origin and growth and substance of religion is the only interpretation which the rationalistic and falsely called scientific spirit will acknowledge. God is imprisoned not only in natural forces, but in natural forces that are known and understood. The supernatural is therefore inevitably the unreal and the mythical, and all records containing it are prejudged and put outside of the bounds of possible history.

The leaders of the extreme criticism, its originators and active propagators, are acknowledged to be such men as Kuenen, Wellhausen, Dillmann, Reuss, Stade and Cornill, all of whom are unbelievers in the supernatural. It is they who have pronounced the Pentateuch "legend, myth, saga, tradition and not trustworthy (*nicht glaubwürdig,* not worthy of be-

lief)," and have flooded Christendom with their opinions, and "overthrown the faith of some." They and their disciples declare that the Priest Code, which professes to have been revealed by God to Moses, "is nothing but an ideal sketch, opposed to patent facts, in the form of history, written by a priest a thousand years after Moses, . . . and neither founded on archives nor given by inspiration." This is the statement of their position given by Prof. Howard Osgood, of the Rochester Theological Seminary.

The first argument of the destructive critics against the early date and Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and therefore the historicity of its records, was that then the art of writing was unknown among the Hebrew people, and that Moses, if there was a Moses, partook of the general illiteracy of the time. If this statement had been true, it would have been, of course, the end of all discussion. But recent abundant discoveries prove beyond a doubt that throughout the East, from the banks of the Nile to the Euphrates, learning was widely diffused, and the age of Moses and of Abraham was an age of intense literary activity. The Tel-

el-Amarna tablets, found buried in the sands of Egypt, and of a date prior to the birth of Moses, inscribed with the cuneiform characters of Babylonia and containing the correspondence of the princes of Syria and of other nations, which were then subject-territories of Egypt, establish the fact that there was, all through that region, a written language which was the medium of official communication, and that there were schools, and libraries, and archives for the preservation of records which long antedated the period of the Exodus. The land of the exile of the children of Israel was distinguished for its scribes and its inscriptions. Inscriptions have been found upon the walls of the temples, the houses, and the tombs, and even upon articles of domestic use. It is absolutely impossible that Moses, who was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," could have been ignorant of an art which was so common. Prof. A. H. Sayce says: "The proof presented by archæology declares not only that Moses *could* have written the Pentateuch, but that it would have been something like a miracle if he had not done so." He also adds, with reference to the educational status of the people, that "Ori-

ental archæology maintains that the Israelites must have known how to read and write before their settlement in Canaan." Indeed, it is abundantly evident that Canaan shared in the literary culture which surrounded it in Chaldea and in Babylonia as in Egypt, and was also a land of schools and libraries. One of its cities was named Kirjath-Sepher, which means "a city of books," and there is every reason to believe that it was only one among many "Book-towns" in the country. It would be strange indeed if God's chosen people alone had been ignorant and unenlightened amid surrounding nations. The evidence is overwhelmingly conclusive that Israel shared in the prevailing intelligence, and that the art of writing existed there from time immemorial. This old argument against the early origin and non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch has long since been abandoned, disappearing, as the darkness of ignorance out of which it grew, before the rising of the sun of archæology.

A second argument in favor of the various authorship and late date of the early books of the Bible has been found in the study of the language of the books themselves, their varied

style, and the introduction and use of words which it is asserted could not have made their appearance in Hebrew literature until the time of the exile or later. This is the linguistic argument, and is the special field of what is called "the higher criticism," a phrase which is a misnomer, and needs to be constantly explained lest it convey an utterly false impression.

This linguistic argument is confessedly largely conjectural, and being dependent upon individual opinion, is perpetually divided against itself. At best it must be of uncertain value. It is the study of the incomplete literature of an imperfectly known language, with little or no comparison with authoritative standards, and its students might well be supposed to offer their literary and especially their historical conclusions, which are of the nature of inferences, with extreme modesty. An undisputed authority has said: "The Hebrew literature that has come down to us is but a fragment of what once existed, and the interpretation of a good deal of it is doubtful. Our knowledge of the Hebrew language is in the highest degree imperfect; our Hebrew lexicons

contain but a fraction of the words once possessed by it, and the meaning of many of the words which have been preserved, as well as of the idioms of the grammar, is merely a matter of conjecture."

And yet the extreme higher critics have pushed their literary dissection to the most astonishing results. Books, chapters, paragraphs, verses, and even phrases have been bisected and dismembered by this wholesale dissecting process, and ascribed to different authors whose names, of course, are unknown—all of which parts have been reduced to their present form by some late redactor, also unknown. It is not necessary to go into details in describing these marvellous conclusions. Genesis, about whose composition the critics seem to be the nearest agreed, is supposed to be the work of not less than seven authors, whose literary labors have been stitched together, with more or less tact and ingenuity, by still another collaborator, but with not enough ingenuity to conceal the seams from eyes that have been furnished with glasses by modern Biblical criticism. These separate contributions aggregate, it is stated, more than four hundred in number,

in a book which ordinarily contains less than forty pages. Well has an able writer exclaimed, "Was there ever such a literary patch quilt"? His language would have been none too strong had he said "crazy quilt."

Yet this mixed product, in which fable and fiction and fraud, legend and fancy and superstition, have been strangely commingled, has been accepted by a people, under the special guidance of God and his Spirit, for thousands of years as their sacred and inspired Scriptures, and as the trustworthy record of their national life; has contained for the world its highest standard of ethical teaching; has preserved a pure monotheistic conception of Deity amid the grossest polytheism; and was accepted and endorsed by the incarnate Son of God, who was the most exalted Teacher of truth the world has ever known, as the literal and authoritative word of God.

Of course, under the ruthless hand of this extreme destructive criticism, not only the early and long accepted date of the origin of the books of the Old Testament and the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch disappear, but the historicity, the truthfulness, the trustworthi-

ness, and the divine authority of these ancient writings are gone. It is a surgical operation, not for the saving of life, but for the destroying of life. The student's study is made a dissecting room. From the dismembered body the life-blood oozes away.

But a new light has come upon the old Book, and that from the quarter from which it was most needed and could only be expected, and it has come with such force and abundance that all eyes can see it. Witnesses to the truthfulness of the records can now be subpœnaed and put upon the stand. Contemporaneous and confirmatory records of an unimpeachable character have been discovered. Tablets, cylinders, monuments, buried libraries, and ancient cities have come forth from their long graves, and united their testimony in favor of the claims of the Hebrew Scriptures. Oriental archæology is collecting and displaying its rich treasures for the confirmation of faith. The plains of Egypt, and the hills of Moab, Nineveh and Babylon and Chaldea, Pithom and Lachish, the mighty fortress, and Ur of the Chaldees, the place of the nativity of Abraham, have all been heard from. Abraham, Joseph and

Moses, Sargon, Esarhaddon, Tiglathpileser, Ahasuerus and Belshazzar have been clothed with flesh and blood.

It has seemed to be a remarkable providence that just at the time when the Old Testament was severely assailed, and stood alone before its accusers, and the hearts of many of its friends were quaking with fear, the pick and the spade should unearth these mighty witnesses, which had been buried and preserved from destruction for thousands of years beneath the sands of the desert and the ruins of almost forgotten cities. In the presence of this new evidence many of the conclusions of the extreme criticism have already been abandoned. A reaction towards the traditional faith has set in. Faith is being confirmed by sight. The excavators are marshaling their witnesses in convincing array, and the Bible is becoming not only a true Book, in a sense as never before, but a new Book in the light of patient and successful research.

All the results of modern criticism that have been valuable (and these are by no means few) will be preserved. But the hasty and conjectural conclusions which will not stand the test

of the increasing light will be buried in the graves which the excavators are digging. What Schliemann has done for ancient Troy and Mycenæ is being done over and over again for the cities, the men, and the events of Hebrew history; and the Old Testament is taking its place again as accredited history among those whose faith in it had been disturbed.

Archæology has produced its corroborative evidence to the early date and facts of the New Testament books as well as the Old, and is modifying very materially the views of some of the ablest and most candid scholars. Prof. William M. Ramsay, of Aberdeen, Scotland, a prominent leader in higher criticism, has been led by explorations made in Asia Minor to retract in a manly fashion his adverse opinions as to the historic character of the Book of Acts and the genuineness and authenticity of some of the Epistles. He speaks for the reactionary change of view of other scholars, as well as his own, when he says: "Such extreme opinions are now held chiefly by the less educated enthusiasts, who catch up the views of the great scholars and exaggerate them with intense but ill-informed fervor, seeing only one side of the

case, and both careless and ignorant of the opposite side."

But it is upon the pages of the Old Testament especially that archæology has been throwing the abundant light of its confirmatory testimony, fixing, in the judgment of many scholars, beyond a reasonable doubt, the early date of the earliest books, and establishing indisputably the reality of many of the names of persons and places, and the historic accuracy of many records, which it was becoming fashionable to regard as mythical and unworthy of scholarly credence. What has been brought to light inspires confidence that when other tablets and monuments, already in the hands of excavators, or still buried deep in the mounds of earth, shall be deciphered, the whole Old Testament will stand substantially confirmed and unchallenged before the scholarship of the world. The results of the progress thus far made in archæological research justify a presumption in favor of the accuracy of the entire record, in the absence of unquestioned contradictory evidence. Prof. J. F. McCurdy says: "It is now in place to use the word 'illustrate' almost exclusively, instead of 'confirm'

in describing the Biblical function of the monuments. The stadium of needed vindication of the historical accuracy of the Old Testament is now as good as past in our progress towards the final goal of truth and knowledge."

Of course, archæology does not, and cannot, touch the question of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures which makes them the Word of God, except indirectly in so far as it establishes their truthfulness. That question is beyond its province, and the claim of the Scriptures to be given by inspiration of God must be determined by other considerations. But archæology has already imparted to the ancient Book a new light and meaning and value; has surrounded it by a glory and a fascination which, with all the sacredness with which it has been invested in the eye of Christian faith, it did not formerly possess; and has opened to the devout student of it a new world of delight and spiritual instruction.

C. J. Ball, in his able illustrated volume, entitled "Light from the East," prefaces its rich chapters with these words: "I sincerely envy those readers to whom these illustrations of the Bible, derived from earlier and contemporary

sources, will come invested with all the charm of the novel and the unexpected. They will find the sacred writings with which they are familiar, acquiring fresh force, significance and value, by comparison and contrast with the literary remains and monumental records of the great empires and people which so powerfully affected the fortunes of Israel. Their Old Testament will become to them a New Testament in the light of Oriental archæology."

Similar language has been used by Prof. Ira M. Price, of the University of Chicago. "Our old Old Testament has now become a marvellously new Old Testament. Many of its transformers were peoples whose ambitions were coeval with the abode of man, whose policy was 'might establishes right,' and whose interests were supremely selfish. These nations formed the background of Israel's life, and gave it many a tint, many a shade, and spots of darkest dye. But their records, chiseled in adamantine volumes, stamped in perishable clay, painted in the darkness of the tombs, or cut on mountain side, bring impartial, unimpeachable and conclusive proof of the veracity of the Old Testament."

So numerous already are the results of archæological researches, in many lands and by many hands, that reference can be made to only a few of those which have a direct bearing upon the Old Testament. As has already been said, the history of the Hebrew nation was interwoven with the history of surrounding dominant nations. For a considerable period of its history, Canaan was subject to Egypt, and the Israelites were in bondage to the mighty Pharoahs. For a still longer period Syria was a subject nation to Babylonia and Assyria. Evetts, in his valuable work, entitled "New Light on the Bible and the Holy Land," says: "It is hardly too much to say that the history of Western Asia, from the eleventh or twelfth century before Christ, down to the sixth, is the history of Assyria and Babylonia. Armenia, Syria and parts of Asia Minor were tributary to them during a great part of that period, and the influence which these great nations exercised upon the civilization of the surrounding countries can hardly be exaggerated. These considerations show of what importance the study of the cuneiform inscriptions must be for the understanding of the history of Israel."

The intimate connection of the life of the Hebrew nation with the life of the more numerous and powerful nations which were contiguous to it, and also the linguistic family tie which bound them together, make these recently discovered histories of inestimable worth in the confirmation of the historic records of God's ancient people; indeed, as has already been remarked, they are the only records with which the inspired records can be compared. The writer just quoted observes: "Since the language of the Assyrians and Babylonians was a Semitic language, closely allied to the Hebrew, the monuments of it that have been discovered during this century are of great value for comparison with the language of the Old Testament; and as the study of the cuneiform inscriptions progresses, it may be expected that the two branches of the Semitic family of speech will throw more and more light upon one another." Or to quote again from Prof. Sayce: "The Scriptures of the Old Testament are a fragment of that ancient oriental literature, other fragments of which are being exhumed from the mounds of Egypt, of Assyria and of Babylonia."

In reference to the extent of the discoveries already made, it may be said in passing that they are very numerous, far exceeding the ability of the decipherers to interpret, and they are multiplying rapidly every year. The Royal Museums of Constantinople and Berlin, the Louvre in Paris, the British Museum in London, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, are the possessors of large deposits of these ancient treasures. Publications many times exceeding the whole literature of the Old Testament have already appeared. The British Museum alone has issued 200 quarto pages and nearly 450 folio pages, and has more than 30,000 tablets which have not yet been translated. Probably not one-fourth of these valuable "finds" has been given to the public. This cuneiform literature which has been unearthed is not only remarkable for its bulk, but for the extent of time which it covers, stretching back five thousand years before Christ, or long before the beginnings of recorded history, and down to the Christian era. It has been stated by one authority that "that portion of the library of Sardanapalus which has already been

rescued from the ruins of his palace consists of considerably more than twelve thousand clay tablets, inscribed with compositions of various dates," and that "there are inscriptions from Assyria and Babylonia contemporary with every period of Old Testament literature."

Another writer has said: "During the last half century a new world has been opened up before us by the excavators and decipherers of the ancient monuments of the east, the great civilizations of the past have risen up, as it were, from their graves, and we find ourselves face to face with the contemporaries of Ezekiel and Hezekiah, of Moses and of Abraham." Of course, the great bulk of these tablets and monumental inscriptions pertain to matters of local and national interest. But enough of them have a direct bearing upon Old Testament history to strengthen amazingly a Biblical faith, and excite the liveliest expectations in regard to future discoveries.

The famous Rosetta stone, which is now in the British Museum, was discovered by a Frenchman, by the name of Boussard, in 1799, near the mouth of the Nile. The finding of this stone, with its trilingual inscription, whose de-

cipherment required many years of patient study, was the beginning of the unfolding of the buried history of a people which antedated the earliest Hebrew records by more than 3,000 years. Out of the sands of Egypt have come obelisks, temples, tombs, mummy forms (some of which have been identified as the rulers whom the children of Israel knew to their sorrow) and tablets, which carry back a high civilization so far as to make the remotest Hebrew history appear to be quite modern, and which, when contemporary with that history, give to it a reality and vividness which are most impressive. The Hebrew records have an Egyptian coloring, and harmonize perfectly with what the sands have revealed of the life and character of the ancient Egyptians and their august rulers. To look upon the preserved forms, raised from their long burial, of the Pharoah of the oppression and the Pharaoh of the exodus is to divest the history of the children of Israel of all doubt and uncertainty, to give life and personality to the names of a remote past, and to cause the tragic events of the Old Testament to pass before the mind with all the distinctness of unquestioned history.

In the early seventies of the last century, Professor Maspero, who was officially connected with the Museum in Bûlak, had his attention called to the fact that valuable relics, more valuable than any which had before been found, were offered for sale at different places along the Nile. Among them were scarabs of great rarity, which belonged to monarchs of ancient dynasties, of whose history little or nothing was known, were worn by them as amulets or seal-rings, and bore the private hieroglyphic marks of their owners. It was evident that some new tomb or burial place had been opened. For a long time it was imposposible to trace these relics or to discover the secret place from which they had been brought to light. At length, after various efforts, including the arrest and imprisonment of one of the discoverers, the secret was divulged, and at Deir-el-Bahari, near Thebes, was found deeply buried in the earth a royal tomb which contained nearly forty mummies of kings, queens, princes and high-priests of religion. It has been said: "There is nothing in history that parallels the dramatic enthusiasm of such a discovery as this. The wonderful news was sent

by telegraph to England and France, and everywhere awoke the curiosity of the world. The silence of thirty centuries was broken. A new chapter had been written in the history of poor desolate Egypt." Descending through a deep shaft, and passing along dark winding passages, the explorers, Professor Maspero and Emil Brugsch, found a mortuary chamber filled with yellow mummies, vases, funeral urns, statuettes and other relics. By the dim candlelight they read upon the coffins with intense excitement and wonder the cartouches of the greatest kings in Egyptian history. "I ask myself now," says Professor Maspero, "if I am not dreaming, when I see and touch the bodies of so many great personages, of whom I never expected to know more than the names."

Later all these treasures were transferred to the museum, the resinous shrouds which had wrapped the bodies were unwound, and the papyri, which were still legible, were carefully read, and now, as another has said: "There is visible in the Museum at Bûlak a long row of mummies, whose very names fill our whole imagination with amazement; there is the king

who knew Joseph; there is the father of Pharaoh's daughter, and the founder of the dynasty that dwelt in Zoan. They are dead as stones, but each 'being dead yet speaketh,' as plainly as did Abel."

These unimpeachable witnesses, preserved by divine Providence through the silence and darkness of centuries from the destructive tooth of time and the destroying hand of man, are brought forth from their graves at a time when most needed, by an ever-watchful God to bear testimony to the truthfulness of his Holy Word. It is impossible to present in detail the specific bearing of Egyptian discoveries upon Biblical history. It may be stated briefly that "thus dates are fixed, and events are established, and an explanation furnished of a hundred mysteries. The declarations of the much-maligned Moses, who wrote in the simplicity of candid narration as an exact historian, are confirmed at every point." From inscriptions on tombs and the records of unrolled papyri, it is made evident that the exaltation of Joseph and the migration of his kindred to Egypt was during the Hyksos supremacy. There is the record of a long-continued famine and the annual distri-

bution of corn; the friendly relation of the Shepherd-Kings towards their Hebrew neighbors; the downfall and expulsion of the Hyksos rulers, and the rise of a new and oppressive Power that "knew not Joseph"; the identification of Rameses II. as the Pharaoh of the oppression, his aggressive and cruel character, and his great activity in the erection of public buildings; the significant discovery of bricks without straw; the degeneracy of the son of Rameses, Meneptah by name, who was a weaker ruler, but a more oppressive tyrant; the finding of the very name "Israel" three times in the inscriptions pertaining to his reign; his probable identification with the Pharaoh of the Exodus; the loss of his son and heir, his first-born, by a melancholy and sudden death, which harmonizes perfectly with the record which Moses has left: "And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharoah that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon"—all these specific things and the general political conditions revealed by the monuments, into which the Biblical history fits with admirable precision, serve to establish

the faith of scholars in the accuracy and trustworthiness of the Old Testament records.

It has been said: "No discovery of the past quarter century has fired enthusiasm in oriental research more than the bringing to light in 1887, in Tel-el-Amarna in Egypt, of those three hundred letters (or tablets) which proved to be international letters or dispatches, dating principally from about 1500 B.C.; that is, while Israel was still sojourning in Egypt." Renan, having declared with great positiveness that "writing was unknown in Israel until three or four hundred years after the time of Moses and Joshua," when he heard of this remarkable discovery which established the fact which he had so strenuously denied, simply refused to believe in the discovery—a short-hand method of treating adverse testimony. These letters, as has already been stated, were written in the cuneiform characters of Babylonia, and were addressed to the two Pharaohs, Amenothes III. and IV., by the princes and rulers of Babylonia, Assyria, Mesopotamia and Palestine, and contained various matters of official correspondence, such as would take place between subject nations and the supreme Power which held

them in subjection. They not only bear unmistakable testimony to the wide diffusion of education at that early date and to the fact "that the Babylonian was the official language of diplomatic intercourse throughout the whole of Western Asia," but they shed much light upon the social relations and the political conditions existing at that time; and especially do they confirm the statements of the Scriptures in reference to the importance and power of a people about whom there was previously considerable mystery, not to say open skepticism. The reference is to the Hittites, who inhabited the northern territory of Palestine. They are often spoken of in the Old Testament as a numerous and formidable foe, inhabiting the land which God gave to Abraham, possessing mighty fastnesses, and stretching their conquests over much territory; and it was asserted by hostile critics that the writer had indulged in much pure fiction about them. But these tablets from Tel-el-Amarna contain more than thirty references to these people, to their origin, their proximity, their aggressiveness, and their great power, which made them sometimes invincible and often a terror to their neighbors. These

tablets and the Hittite inscriptions which have been discovered elsewhere, have again put to silence the voice of hostile criticism against the Bible, and established the veracity of its statements to the very letter. As another has said: "It was often objected to the Scripture record that history knew nothing of Hittites contiguous to Syria—Hittites who might unite with Egypt in delivering Israel. The Hittites were thought of as a contemptible little tribe around Hebron. But this objection will be urged no longer. Monuments extending from Lydia in Asia Minor to Carchemish on the Euphrates, have established the existence of a great Hittite empire, so strong as not to shun conflict with Egypt and Assyria."

This is but one illustration of many of the rashness of some critics in advancing opinions which rest only upon lack of knowledge, a lack which the work of the explorer is constantly supplying. Such illustrations are numerous enough to justify the severe language of Professor Sayce: "Time after time statements (in the Scripture) have been assumed to be untrue, because we cannot bring forward other evidence in support of the facts which they record.

The critic has made his own ignorance the measure of the credibility of an ancient document." In this way it was asserted that Babylonian armies could not have marched in Palestine in the time of Abraham, and that Babylonian kings could not have established their empire there, and that the story of the priest-king, Melchizedek, being unsupported, was therefore unhistorical. The theory was advanced and persistently advocated, that the fourteenth chapter of Genesis was a piece of pure fiction, manufactured by reason of a desire to magnify the character of Abraham, and utterly unworthy of credence. But now all this adverse criticism has been exploded. The story of the campaign of Chedorlaomer and his Babylonian allies has been found to be a historic fact. Mr. Pinches has discovered the names of Amraphel (Khammurabi) and Chedorlaomer (Kudur-lagamar), and Tidal (Tudghal), and Arioch (Eri-Aku) on the ancient tablets, and the use of these names, with the accompanying explanatory phrases, which until recently have been unknown outside of the Bible, determine beyond a reasonable doubt the early date and authenticity of the Biblical

record. Professor Hommel says: "For it is absolutely inconceivable that a Jew of the post-exilic period should have been the first to derive from the sacred Babylonian records such exact information in regard to an incident in the history of the earliest kings of Babylon. . . . The authenticity of a narrative, such as that under consideration, is in itself an unanswerable criticism upon the views which are now in fashion with regard to the credibility of the ancient Hebrew tradition. The subject matter of the present chapter [that is, Gen. xiv.] will, therefore, forever remain a stumbling-block in the path of those who refuse to recognize a single line of the Pentateuch to be genuine, and, try how they may to remove it, it will continue to defy their persistent efforts."

Professor Price concludes his consideration of this chapter as follows: "So that the testimony of the monuments is to the effect that this chapter is not to be regarded in any sense as a bit of fiction, but as a genuine scrap of a record of a veritable old Western campaign of the allied kings of Mesopotamia."

One of the most interesting and valuable dis-

coveries of archæological research is what is called the "Moabite Stone," which was discovered in 1868 by Rev. F. Klein, a missionary. It was found at Dibân, the Dibon of Isaiah 15:2. At first, Mr. Klein had little idea of its value or bearing upon Old Testament history, but attempted to purchase it as a relic for the Museum of Berlin. An earnest competition for its possession between the German and French authorities excited the suspicion of the Arabs that it contained marvellous powers, and they, fearing to lose such a prize, built a fire under it, and then poured upon it cold water, so that it was broken in fragments. These they distributed among themselves as charms to protect them and their homes from evil. But, fortunately, the most of the fragments were afterward secured, and by the aid of paper-squeezes or impressions, taken before it was broken, were reset, and the stone is now in the Louvre in Paris in a fairly complete form. The translation of the inscription showed that it was a record of the wars of Mesha, King of Moab, with Omri, King of Israel, and his successors, Ahab, Jehoram and Jehoshaphat. It confirms and supplements the story contained in the

second Book of Kings. It contains the names of towns and cities, which have long since disappeared, but with which the Bible has made us familiar. It also declares that the king undertook his wars at the command of his god, Chemosh, who is mentioned in the Old Testament as "the abomination of Moab"; that is, the idol deity of the Moabites, which was an abomination to Jehovah.

The characters of the inscription are Phœnician, and the language is closely allied to the ancient Hebrew, as would be expected, when we consider the common origin of the Jews and the Moabites, the one being the descendants of Abraham and the other the descendants of his nephew, Lot. The date of the stone takes us back to the days of Ahab and Jezebel, Jehoshaphat and Jehu, Elijah and Elisha, Naaman, the leper, and the Shunamitish widow. The great value of the stone is expressed in the following paragraph, taken from the monograph of Rev. W. P. Walsh: "There is scarcely a line of this interesting record which has not its links either with the geography, the history, or the language of the Bible; and that not only in the way of corrob-

orating the information which we already obtain from that source, but in the way of adding to that knowledge, and by so doing explaining and illustrating many points which hitherto have been perplexing and obscure. Indeed, in this respect the Moabite stone stands pre-eminent amongst those old monuments, which have risen, as it were, from the grave of ages to bear witness to the truth of the Sacred Record. It is at once a confirmation and a supplement, a witness to attest the truth of what we already know from the Books of Inspiration, and an Interpreter to clear up by its silent, but eloquent testimony, many points which the brevity of the Scriptural Records has left unexplained, but which shed new light and interest upon the Records when once they are perceived."

We cannot take time to unfold the full meaning and bearing of this discovery upon Old Testament history. The stone is but four feet high and two feet wide, a stone of black basalt, and contains only thirty-four lines of inscription, some of which are imperfect. But it is a mighty witness to the truthfulness of the inspired Record, for which it had patiently

waited for three millenniums. Mr. Walsh has well said: "Now, in this nineteenth century of doubt and skepticism, when infidelity grows daring and faith grows dim, this patriarchal Stone of Moab, with the snows of three thousand years upon its head, stands forth to rebuke our unbelief, and to give fresh testimony to the Oracles of God."

Brief reference must be made to the creation tablets of Assyria which archæology has brought to light. It is well known that almost all the great nations of the east have had their traditions of the creation of the world and of man, the primeval fall and the deluge. The finding of actual tablets containing these traditions, and their comparison with the Biblical account, have been matters of absorbing interest. Of course, the conclusions reached have been various, and have possibly been determined by the predispositions of men. These tablets of the creation are supposed to have been seven in number. Not all of them have been found, and some are only fragments. The following are specimen translations:

"There was a time when what is overhead was not called heaven,

What is beneath was not yet called earth.
The abyss, the ancient, their progenitor,
The mother, Tiamat, was the bearer of them all.
Their waters were all together in one place,
The fields were not prepared, the moor was not to be seen.
At that time none of the gods had appeared,
Neither was any one's name implored, nor was any destiny fixed.
(Then) the gods were created . . .
Lachmu and Lachamu issued forth,
And they brought forth . . . An-Sar (and) Ki-Sar were created.
A long time elapsed . . .
(Ere) the god Anu (Bel and Ea were born).
An-Sar and Ki-Sar (bore them)."

After describing the victory of Merodach over Tiamat, the goddess of chaos, the heavens are constructed out of the skin of Tiamat, and the three gods, Anu, Bel and Ea dwell there. Then the stars are fixed in their places, and the periods of time are bounded by months and years. Finally upon the seventh tablet is an account of the creation of animal life.

"At that time the gods in their assembly created . . .
They prepared the mighty . . .
They created the living creatures,
The cattle of the field, the (wild) beasts of the field, and creeping things;

(They prepared dwelling places) for the living creatures;
They distributed the creeping things of the field, the creeping things of the city.
. . . the creeping things, the sum of all creation."

A careful comparison of the Babylonian account with the account in Genesis discloses some marked resemblances, and some unlikenesses which are no less marked and significant. Genesis speaks of God as the Creator of all things, while the tablets describe several gods as first brought forth, and then joining in the work of creation. Moreover, the tablets represent certain elemental forces, as mighty deities at war with each other. But the most marked unlikeness is that Genesis teaches a pure monotheism, while the tablets partake of the faith of the people and are polytheistic.

The monuments give us also the record of the existence of the Sabbath or rest-day, with some variations from the Biblical account. It was to be observed strictly by high and low, by the king as well as by the people. "Flesh cooked on the coals or in the smoke may not be eaten; the clothing of the body may not be changed; white garments may not be put on; sacrifices may not be offered; the king may not

ride in his chariot, nor speak in public." It is evident from this record that the origin of the Sabbath was not of late date among the Jews, as has sometimes been alleged; but its existence can be traced back as far as human history runs, and its institution may well have commemorated God's rest from his creative work.

The monuments furnish, so far as known, no verbal record of the fall in Eden. But this event is supposed to be set forth on an ancient cylinder, which represents the picture of a tree bearing fruit, with a man and woman sitting beneath, and the form of a serpent behind the woman.

The Babylonian deluge tablet is the most complete of all, and has also many striking resemblances to the Biblical record. But there is found in it the expression of no moral purpose, and no judgment against prevailing sin, but only the decision of a capricious Deity, mixed with much fanciful mythology and the same polytheistic faith.

It may be said in passing that Lenormant affirms that the tale of the deluge is "a universal tradition among all the branches of the human family; excepting, however, the blacks," and

that "it must of necessity be a recollection of a great and terrible occurrence, which impressed the imagination of the ancestors of our race so powerfully as never to have been forgotten by their descendants." He also declares that a remembrance prevailing everywhere, so precise and so concordant, cannot have been produced by a myth arbitrarily invented. And Mr. Howorth, in his able work on "The Mammoth and the Flood," having collected the diluvial traditions of many races and countries, and a great mass of palæontological evidence, asserts that they all point unmistakably to "a widespread calamity, involving a flood on a great scale. I do not see how the historian, the archæologist and palæontologist can avoid making this conclusion in future a prime factor in their discussions, and I venture to think that before long it will be accepted as unanswerable." Other eminent scientists agree with this belief, notably Principal Dawson and the Duke of Argyle.

In comparing these written accounts, we find that the Biblical is characterized by a beautiful simplicity, by a conspicuous purity of thought and style, by an exalted moral tone, and by a recognition of one God, the infinite Spirit,

Creator of man and of all things, infinite in wisdom, in goodness and in power, and righteous in all his ways. These characteristics are conspicuously absent from the other records.

If, now, it be asked how can the likeness between the records be accounted for, shall it be answered, first, that the Hebrew record was borrowed from the Babylonian, or secondly, that the Babylonian was borrowed from the Hebrew, or thirdly, that "their likeness is due to a common inheritance," to an early revelation and actual history, the knowledge of which was transmitted with greater or less purity from father to son, and from generation to generation? (There is a fourth suggestion that these similar traditions among different nations were in no way connected with each other, but were the result of a similar way of thinking, "the exercise of the common human faculties." This suggestion is so far contrary to all reason, and so utterly incredible, as hardly to deserve mention at all.) It will be granted that such transmitted knowledge never becomes purer and simpler, but rather gathers increase and admixture and extravagance in the transmission. As another has said: "The

simpler form is the groundwork of the Biblical narrative; and the simpler form, according to the generally recognized principle, is that nearest the source, most closely akin to the occurrence or the original record." The Hebrew account, therefore, could not have been derived from the Babylonian. It seems more than probable that the Babylonian record grew out of some earlier and purer faith. A distinguished French author says: "The cosmogony and mythology . . . of all nations are evidently primitive history, altered by oral tradition, transformed by the imagination and symbolized." Principal Alfred Cave, after a candid and thorough examination of all facts and arguments that are germane to the discussion of this important question, concludes that the earlier chapters of Genesis contain traditions that are "primitive," "original," "of the highest antiquity," "pure," and "must be historical." This undoubtedly implies a divine illumination. But there can be no objection to this, since it is abundantly evident that God's ancient people were enabled to keep a monotheistic faith and a pure tradition under a divine guidance and preservation.

Evetts has well said: "But after all, this close connection between Canaan and Mesopotamia, both in earlier and in later times, only accentuates more strongly the independent character of the religious literature and the religious practice of the Jews. How much more marvellous does the Old Testament become, when it is clearly understood that it was written by members of a small nation or tribe, under the overshadowing influence of the supreme power of Assyria and Babylonia!" The faith and tradition that were kept pure and simple by divine aid amid overwhelming temptations to apostasy may well be believed to have been received by divine illumination. The marvel in the one case is no greater than the marvel in the other.

We cannot forbear quoting the weighty language of Mr. Gladstone in "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture," in which he contrasts the Biblical account of the creation with the record of the tablets. "The two are evidently accounts proceeding from a common source, but derived through channels partly or wholly independent. The one comes through a powerful and civilized empire; the other through

an obscure nomad family. In the relative superiority of the Mosaic narrative, all the rules of merely human likelihoods are reversed; and the presumption of a divine illumination is proportionately augmented. But the unexpected antiquity of the inferior legend [more than 2,000 years B.C.] attest by an independent witness, if not the truth, yet at least the presumable origin of its transcendent rival."

In view of the facts which have been presented, which are but a small part of the accumulated testimony of the ancient monuments, the language of Professor Sayce seems to be not unwarranted. "To the assertion that these books are the fabrication of an age long subsequent to the events they profess to record, and that the events themselves are legendary and mythical, the Oriental archæologist returns an emphatic no." Again he says: "For the archæologist, at any rate, the Pentateuch is, as it were, rooted in the Mosaic age." And again he says: "I see no reason for denying that the Pentateuch is substantially the work of Moses."

It is due to Professor Sayce that he be allowed to explain what he means by "substan-

tially." The entire paragraph is as follows: "If, then, I were to be asked if I believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, I should answer that such a belief seems to me to involve considerably fewer difficulties than does the contrary belief of the 'higher criticism.' Of course, such a belief does not necessarily mean that the Hebrew legislator wrote the Pentateuch precisely in the form in which we now possess it. It does not exclude the fact of later revision or the addition of editorial notes (for example the account of Moses' death). Jewish tradition avers that in its present form the Pentateuch has come to us from Ezra, and the doubts that have been cast upon the tradition savor of hypercriticism. But I see no reason for denying that the Pentateuch is substantially the work of Moses."

George Rawlinson wrote forty years ago: "It is highly probable that he (Moses) also made use of documents. So much fanciful speculation has been advanced, so many vain and baseless theories have been built up, in what is called the 'document-hypothesis' concerning Genesis, that I touch the point with some hesitation, and beg at once to be under-

stood as not venturing to dogmatize in a matter of such difficulty. But both *a priori* probability and the internal evidence seem to me to favor the opinion of Vitringa and Calmet, that Moses consulted monuments or records of former ages, which had descended from the families of the patriarchs, and by collecting, arranging, adorning, and where they were deficient, completing them, composed his history.

All tends to assure us that in this marvellous volume we have no old wives' tales, no 'cunningly devised fables' (2 Pet. 1:16), but 'a treasure of wisdom and knowledge' (Col. 2:3), as important to the historical inquirer as to the theologian. There may be obscurities—there may be occasionally, in names and numbers, accidental corruptions of the text—there may be a few interpolations—glosses which have crept in from the margin; but upon the whole it must be pronounced that we have in the Pentateuch a genuine and authentic work, and one which, even were it not inspired, would be, for the times and countries whereof it treats, the leading and paramount authority. It is (let us be assured) MOSES who is still 'read in the syna-

gogues every Sabbath day,' and they who 'resist' him, by impugning his veracity, like Jannes and Jambres of old, 'resist the truth.' " And this judgment has been wonderfully confirmed by the archæological discoveries which the succeeding decades have brought to light, all of which, so far as they have been deciphered, seem to have been, without a discordant note, in favor of the traditional faith.

THE VOICE OF HISTORY

"In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." (II. Corinthians 13 : 1.)

CHAPTER II.

THE VOICE OF HISTORY.

CHRISTIANITY is pre-eminently a historical religion, historical in its origin and in its unfolding, and thereby brought into visible touch and connection with contemporaneous history. It is customary to divide history into "sacred" and "profane," terms, which do not designate parts that succeed each other in the order of time, but parts that are synchronous, and go to make up the whole of history, the one seeking to penetrate and mould the other, and the second bearing witness more or less abundantly to the existence of the first. The dispensation of the Old Testament, which has been called "the first stage" of Christianity, a period of preparation for its full manifestation when Christ should come "in the fullness of time," was largely the history of a single nation, including, of course, its relations to contemporaneous and contiguous nations, whose history came under

the head of "profane." In the New Testament the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are exclusively biographical and historical books, recounting the life and deeds of the great Founder of Christianity and his immediate disciples, and they constitute a part of the recorded history of the time in which they lived, and contain frequent allusions to the secular history which was going on simultaneously. The Epistles of the New Testament, which are more exclusively doctrinal from the nature of the case, have all of them a distinct historic setting, and it would naturally be expected that Christian history, being lived in the midst of secular history, and coming often into vital, and sometimes into antagonistic, relation to it, would find some confirmatory passages in its record.

This characteristic of Christianity has been often spoken of, and is a very important and distinguishing characteristic. The eminent historian, George Rawlinson, says: "Christianity is in nothing more distinguished from the other religions of the world than in its objective and historical character. The religions of Greece and Rome, of Egypt, India, Persia, and the

East generally, were speculative systems which did not even postulate a historical basis." And Dean Stanley emphasizes this contrast between Christianity and other religions, when he says that "it alone of all religions claims to be founded not on fancy or feeling, but on fact and truth."

This characteristic is immensely to the advantage of Christianity, that its doctrinal teachings are bound up with facts, and are based upon them, for if its alleged facts are proved to be historically verifiable and worthy of credence, there is presumptive evidence that its doctrines are worthy of acceptance. The religion is taken out of the realm of myths and legends, when the apostles of it can affirm: "What we have seen and heard, that declare we unto you."

Moreover, such a religion invites careful historical investigation. It challenges inquiry, and appeals to secular history, so far as it is available, for confirmation of its facts. Christianity, including its preparatory stage, is set forth in records which cover a period of several thousand years, and which contain "a kind of abridgment of the history of the world," down

to a certain date. These records are to be compared with other contemporaneous records, which are known, or may be discovered, and if the facts recorded in sacred history are established so far as the comparison can be made, it is only fair to accept the credibility of all. The truthfulness of a part being clearly proved, the truthfulness of all may be safely asserted until there is discovered indisputable historical evidence to the contrary.

This principle of historical criticism which is just and reasonable, unfortunately has not always prevailed. During the past century a new science, so-called, of historical criticism has arisen, which has shown a disposition to relegate many things in the Sacred Scriptures to the region of legend and myth, and to believe nothing unless compelled to by outside testimony, and then only reluctantly, slowly yielding point by point in its method of doubt and denial, as it was driven to retreat before the advancing force of confirmatory evidence. "The skepticism in which the science originated," it has been said, the language having reference to both sacred and profane history, "has clung to it from first to last, and in recent

times we have seen not only a greater leaning to the destructive than to the constructive side, but a tendency to push doubt and incredulity beyond due limits, to call in question without cause, and to distrust what is sufficiently established."

Biblical criticism, which has recently been discussing with great earnestness the historicity of the books of the Old Testament, was applied earlier in the nineteenth century to the books of the New Testament. Much of it was destructive in its spirit and unscientific in its method, and the names of Paulus, Bauer, Strauss, and Renan will long be remembered as the great leaders in this hostile assault upon the very citadel of Christianity. Able defenders were not wanting, who applied the principles of criticism in a reasonable and constructive manner to the Scriptures, with the final results of the discussion all on the side of the historical trustworthiness and validity of the New Testament records. The discussion was welcomed by the friends of the Bible, for they believed that, in the end, faith would be established upon a more intelligent and enduring foundation. Their faith was amply justified, and it is doubtful, if

again for a hundred years, if ever, the historicity of the books of the New Testament will be so seriously or widely called in question. It was during that discussion that Niebuhr, a man of acknowledged leadership and of eminent historical and critical ability, put on record his deliberate conclusion: "In my opinion he is not a Protestant Christian, who does not receive the historical facts of Christ's earthly life, in their literal acceptance, with all their miracles, as equally authentic with any event recorded in history, and whose belief in them is not as firm and tranquil as his belief in the latter; who has not the most absolute faith in the Articles of the Apostles' Creed, taken in their grammatical sense; who does not consider every doctrine and every precept of the New Testament as undoubtedly divine revelation, in the sense of the Christians of the first century."

In this chapter the evidence of history to the New Testament and the early Christian Church will be presented. The bearing of secular history upon the Old Testament records has already been considered under "The Light from the Monuments."

It will be convenient to consider the topic of

this chapter under two heads; first, the evidence of secular history to the origin of Christianity, the character of its adherents and its rapid progress; and secondly, the testimony to the early existence and contents of the sacred books of the New Testament.

Before presenting this evidence from secular sources, attention should be called to the almost innumerable allusions in the New Testament to the personal and political history of the time in which its books claim to have been written, allusions to the various rulers, Jewish and Roman, to the changes in the government in the land of Palestine, which was peculiarly mixed and changeable, to the social and political customs, and to many events which disclosed the state of society and the characteristics of both rulers and people, all of which are confirmed by the statements of contemporaneous history, and harmonize perfectly with what we learn from uninspired writers. Here is a volume of evidence as to the date and trustworthiness of the New Testament records, of which no one can have any idea who has not given careful study to it. It is safe to say that these sacred books must have been written in

the first century of the Christian era, and could not have been written at any other time, either before or after. The incidental allusions, which occur on almost every page, often of so delicate a character that it is inconceivable that they could have been fictitious, or forged, or subsequently imagined, settle the question of date and genuineness beyond a reasonable doubt.

I. It could hardly be expected that Josephus, the Jewish historian, who was born A.D. 37, would record in detail the circumstances of the rise and growth of the new religion, which was so offensive to him, and so opposed to his national prejudices. Many things recorded by heathen writers, with which he must have been personally acquainted, he has passed by in silence, a silence which must be regarded as intentional. Yet Josephus has said enough, which can be accepted as genuine, to make him an unwilling witness to Christ and the truth of the gospel records. Among other things he has reported the adultery of Herod Antipas with his brother Philip's wife, and the execution of John the Baptist, calling him by his familiar gospel-name. This is his record of the crime and the tragedy: "Herodias was married to

Herod, the son of Herod the Great, who was born of Mariamne, the daughter of Simon, the high-priest, who had also a daughter Salome; after the birth of whom, Herodias, in shameful violation of the customs of our nation, allowed herself to marry Herod, the brother of her former husband by the same father, separating from him while he was living. Now this man held the office of tetrarch of Galilee."

This statement is in exact harmony with the record in the Gospels, as is also the following statement about the rebuke administered by the righteous forerunner of Christ, and the penalty which he suffered in consequence: "Now some of the Jews thought the army of Herod had been destroyed by God in most righteous vengeance for the punishment inflicted upon John, surnamed the Baptist. For he taught the Jews to cultivate virtue, and to practise righteousness towards each other, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism. For he declared that this dipping would be acceptable to Him, if they used it, not with reference to the renunciation of certain sins, but to the purification of the body, the soul having been purified by righteousness. And when others thronged

to him (for they were profoundly moved at the hearing of his words), Herod feared that his great influence over the men would lead them to some revolt (for they seemed ready to do anything by his advice); he therefore thought it much better to anticipate the evil by putting him to death, before he had attempted to make any innovation, than to allow himself to be brought into trouble, and then repent after some revolutionary movement had commenced. And so John, in consequence of the suspicion of Herod, was sent as a prisoner to the aforementioned castle of Machærus, and was there put to death."

Here we have a considerable record of John the Baptist, his character and his work. He is called by his gospel-name, and is described as a preacher of righteousness who practised the baptism of repentance. He is spoken of as winning a great popularity and a wide following, as coming in conflict with Herod, and as being arrested and imprisoned. The place of his imprisonment is told, and also the fact of his execution. All this is in exact accord with the gospel narrative.

And more than this. In two passages, which

are undoubtedly genuine, Josephus has spoken of the trial and execution of James, the apostle, who was accused of "transgressing the laws," and whom he calls "James, the Just," and "the most righteous of men"; and in both passages he has represented him as "the brother of Jesus who was called Christ." Perhaps this is all we could expect from the pen of a Jewish historian, blinded with prejudice and determined to treat the new faith and its disciples with deserved contempt. Certain important facts are established which give reality to the beginnings of Christianity as a part of the history of the time and of the people among whom it had its origin.

But the writings of heathen authors have been preserved, which speak more fully and unreservedly of the existence, the character, the sufferings, and the rapid increase of the early Christians. The passage from Tacitus, one of the most distinguished and careful historians of all times, who was born probably in the fifties of the first century, is well known. He is speaking of the burning of Rome in the reign of the Emperor Nero, and of the general belief that the conflagration was the work of the Emperor himself. The passage is as follows: "In order,

therefore, to put a stop to the report, he laid the guilt, and inflicted the severest punishments, upon a set of people who were holden in abhorrence for their crimes, and called by the vulgar, Christians. The founder of that name was Christ, who suffered death in the reign of Tiberius, under his procurator, Pontius Pilate. This pernicious superstition, thus checked for awhile, broke out again, and spread not only over Judea, where the evil originated, but through Rome also, whither all things that are horrible and shameful find their way, and are practised. Accordingly, the first who were apprehended confessed, and then on their information a vast multitude were convicted, not so much of the crime of setting Rome on fire as of hatred of mankind."

Then the historian goes on to describe their punishment by the most shocking methods that Neronian cruelty could devise: the helpless victims being disguised in the skins of wild beasts, and worried and torn to death by dogs, being crucified, being clothed in inflammable covering and set on fire as torches to illumine the Emperor's gardens; while Nero took a brutal enjoyment in the hideous spectacle, and

mingled with the populace in the dress of a charioteer, until the popular feeling was completely turned, and the poor sufferers "came to be pitied as victims, not so much to the public good as to the cruelty of one man."

Here we are in possession of certain valuable facts in evidence. The founder of this sect of Christians was a man called Christ. He lived under Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator in Judea. He suffered death in the reign of Tiberius. The new religion, which was temporarily checked by the death of its founder, revived and spread widely, not only throughout Judea, but as far as Rome also. A vast multitude of the followers of Christ, who lived in Rome in the time of Nero, were falsely accused and cruelly tortured and slain. So far was this cruelty carried by the Emperor in the vain attempt to free himself from the charge of burning the city, that the indifference and hatred of the people were changed to compassion, and undoubtedly the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church. Tacitus himself evidently had no sympathy with the new religion and its multiplying followers. He calls it an "execrable superstition." He voices the popu-

lar but absurd charge that they were guilty of "hatred of mankind"; but he makes his record as a faithful historian, and has left to all subsequent generations this indubitable testimony as to the origin and rapid growth of the Christian religion, as well as to the fierce opposition which it encountered.

Suetonius also has left a brief record of the same persecution. His words are: "The Christians were punished, a set of men of a new and mischievous superstition." Juvenal, in his first book of Satires, refers to the shocking punishment which was inflicted upon the early Christians. Lucan in his Pharsalia, and Porphyry, writing against Christians, both bear witness to the existence of organized Christianity and the doctrines which distinguished its faith.

But the most striking testimony of secular history is that which is given by Pliny, the younger, in his letter to the Emperor Trajan, asking for official instruction as to the manner in which he should deal with Christians in his province. He lived at the end of the first century. His letter is too long for quotation; but it contains certain important evidential facts, viz.: that at that time Christians were numer-

ous and well known throughout Asia Minor; that they were of both sexes and of all ages, were found in the country as well as in the city, and formed so large a part of the inhabitants that in some places the heathen temples were deserted; that they were falsely accused and punished with the severest tortures, and yet for the most part remained steadfast and unflinchingly loyal to their new faith; that they were wont to meet together on the morning of the first day of the week, and sing a hymn to Christ as God; and that they bound themselves by an oath at their meetings not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery, or the violation of their word or pledge, after which they ate in common a harmless meal.

These are facts of the greatest importance, to which Pliny bears testimony, viz.: the number, wide diffusion, worship, and conspicuous and conscientious purity and high moral character of Christians in an age of corruption and grossest immorality, their devout reverence for Christ as the Son of God, and their habitual observance of the memorial rite of the Lord's Supper. In one thing only was he wrong, namely, when he, like Tacitus, accused them of

being "haters of mankind," a charge which could have arisen only from the fact that they deserted the temples and the national deities, on whose votive recognition and gracious favor the heathen believed that all prosperity in war and peace depended. Their neglect of the national worship would leave the people exposed to the vengeance of their deities. Indeed, it was on this account alone that Pliny was led to seek the Emperor's instruction. Their persecutions were visited upon them in order to drive them back to the worship which they had forsaken, to compel them to invoke the favor of the gods, and at the same time to offer frankincense and wine before the statue of the Emperor, who was worshipped as a god. When under the pressure of extreme torture any Christians weakened and did this, then their punishment was remitted, and they were set free. They could have purchased their liberty at any time at the price of renouncing Christ and going back to the national faith and worship. Such citizens who were acknowledged to be honest, pure, truthful and peaceable, brought no weakness or damage to the nation. They were not the haters, but the lovers of

mankind. Their only crime was their rejection of heathen deities, and their acceptance of Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

This is evident from the reply which the Emperor returned to Pliny's letter, which has also fortunately been preserved to us. "You have pursued the right course, my dear Pliny, in conducting the case of those Christians who have been brought before you [that is, in putting them to torture, and compelling them to recant their Christian faith, and worship the national deities]. . . . If they are brought before you, and convicted, they must be punished; yet with this proviso, that he who denies that he is a Christian, and confirms this denial by actually invoking our gods, however he may have been suspected in time past, shall obtain pardon upon his repentance."

Trajan was careful to require that all accusations against the rapidly increasing followers of Christ should be made openly, and not secretly or anonymously, as was also Hadrian, who in his rescript to Minucius Fundanus, Proconsul of Asia, wrote: "If, therefore, any one accuses them, and proves that they have done anything contrary to the laws, do you deter-

mine accordingly, in proportion to the greatness of the offence; but, by Hercules, if any one brings forward such an accusation slanderously, take him and punish him for his impudence."

These are the principal pagan authorities who bear confirmatory testimony to Christian facts. Christianity won its converts openly from among the people. It had its adherents in the official family of the Emperor. It came under the notice of the government, both by reason of its growing strength and the character of its disciples. Their doctrine separated them from the national faith and worship. Their attitude was calm and sublimely heroic in the face of the most cruel death. Their conduct was not open to any charges of crimes contained in the national code. These things are matters of history. Christianity entered quickly into the life of the world, and compelled recognition in its annals. In an astonishingly brief period of time it took possession of the empire which did its utmost to extinguish it, and laid its victorious hand upon its institutions, its customs, its faith, its life, and its history.

Gibbon, the historian of the Roman Empire, though his infidelity made it impossible for him to be just in his treatment of the Christian religion, records its rise, the conspicuous virtues and excellences of its adherents, and its rapid spread and triumph, until "in the reign of Constantine it superseded all other religions, and became the religion of the empire." This he calls "a remarkable phenomenon." He fails to explain satisfactorily how this religion arose, or what was the secret of its power, of its effects upon the personal character of its followers, or of its marvellous triumph. Such an attempt would have brought him face to face with the divinity of its Founder, the supernatural character of its revelation, and the regenerating and transforming power of its doctrine. He does not present any sufficient natural causes for such "a remarkable phenomenon," because there were no sufficient natural causes discoverable. Heathenism and infidelity record the historic facts of Christianity, but are alike speechless in their presence, and powerless to account for them. To speak, to speak reasonably and intelligently, would be to renounce their heathenism and infidelity, and

confess the divinity of Christ and his religion.

II. We pass now to a consideration, which will be necessarily very brief, of the testimony found in numerous writers to the early existence and contents of the books of the New Testament. It has already been remarked that there are in these books many allusions, personal, historical and geographical, which fix the dates of these writings beyond a reasonable doubt, and in some instances the country also in which they were composed. If Renan found in his visit to Judea "a fifth Gospel," it was because the four Gospels had taken their distinctive tone and color from the unchangeable features of the holy land in which they were written.

But our attention is directed now, not to the internal evidence, but to the external or historical evidence in favor of the New Testament Scriptures. An eminent American author, writing upon the evidences of Christianity, has said: "The books of the New Testament are quoted or alluded to by a series of writers who may be followed up in unbroken succession from the present age to that of the apostles." The accuracy of this statement as applicable to

the centuries of the Christian era since the fourth century no one would dream of calling in question. "Whoever has the least acquaintance with the civilized world, as far upward as the fourth century, must know that the acknowledgment of the New Testament, as composed of authentic writings, is interwoven with all the literature, science, and political as well as religious institutions of every subsequent age."

The history of what are called civilized nations for fifteen hundred years has been to some extent Christian history; that is, a history that has been perceptibly affected by a religious faith which has been created by certain religious writings which compose the New Testament, and has been nourished and strengthened by them. These nations constitute what is significantly denominated Christendom, a large section of the earth's surface which has been, in some degree, Christianized, Christ-ened, brought under the influence of that supreme Personality, whose birth and life and death are recorded, and whose doctrinal teachings are unfolded, in the Christian Scriptures.

The testimony of the numerous Christian

writers of the first four centuries to the existence and contents of the books of the New Testament might properly be adduced here. It is overwhelmingly conclusive. We shall do little more than mention their names. In the fourth century there were Augustine, Rufinus, Jerome, Gregory, Athanasius, Lactantius, Hilary, Cyril and Eusebius. In the third century there were Origen, Cyprian, Gregory of Neo-Cæsarea and Dionysius. In the second century there were Tertullian, Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Papias. And in the church of the first century there were at least five writers, who, because they were contemporary with the apostles, are usually denominated "Apostolic Fathers," viz.: Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Polycarp and Ignatius, some of whom are mentioned by name in the books of the New Testament, and must have enjoyed intimate association with their writers. One of them is positively known to have been an immediate disciple of the Apostle John, viz.: Polycarp.

In these early writings we find the catalogue of the New Testament books exactly as we have them now. All of them make constant reference to them, and quote from them so

copiously, that it has been truthfully said that should the New Testament be destroyed, it would be possible from these accurate and abundant quotations to restore it again substantially and in all essential points as we have it in our hands to-day. It should be added that they all speak of these New Testament records as trustworthy history, with no slightest intimation that they contained anything mythical or legendary. Indeed, they take us back to the very time of the writers of the New Testament, and into the very presence of the men who testified to what they had seen and heard from the lips of Jesus Christ, so that evidently there was no lapse of time sufficient for the slow growth of legends and myths and imaginary accretions to the original facts and truths of veritable history.

There was also the pagan writer Celsus, who is known as the first great opponent of Christianity and a powerful controversialist. He is believed to have lived during the second century of the Christian era, certainly before the time of Origen, who lived in the third century, and through whom and his famous reply we are made acquainted with Celsus and with

the nature of his assaults upon the Christian faith. The production of Celsus perished, no copy of it remaining, and later generations would have know nothing of it, had it not been preserved to them, in part, in the reply of his Christian opponent, the defender of the faith, whom God raised up for an evident purpose.

A distinguished Scotch Biblical scholar of our day has said: "Now, it so happens that out of the materials contained in the parts of his writings that have been preserved by Origen, an abridgment of the Life of Christ might be constructed, and, indeed we may say, has been constructed by more writers than one." One author records the boast of Celsus, that he was thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures, and adds: "He had evidently read the books of Moses, and perhaps all the other books of the Old Testament, and, as it appears, all the books of the New Testament," although he aimed his assault against the historical books, especially the biographies of Christ. Dr. Doddridge says: "There are in Celsus about eighty quotations from the books of the New Testament, or references to them, of which Origen has taken notice." He alluded to Christ's com-

passionate treatment of sinners, for the purpose of condeming what, in the eyes of Christendom, was Christ's crowning glory and God-like excellence. Whenever he could treat maliciously or misinterpret Christ's conduct or words, he did not hesitate to do so. He charged Christ's biographers with falsifying in some instances; but he made no specifications, and on the whole treated the records as actual history, and made them, as they stand, the object of his hostile criticism, and the ground of his repudiation of the Christian religion. He became unwittingly a valuable witness to the genuineness of the Scriptures which he sought to destroy, and furnished one of many illustrations, in which God has "caused the wrath of man to praise him."

Such is a very general and incomplete presentation of the evidence of history in favor of Christianity, and the records in which it is deposited. If Christ could affirm of the Old Testament Scriptures, "These are they which testify of me," still more emphatically may it be affirmed that the New Testament Scriptures bear indubitable testimony to the actual facts of the life and to the teachings of Jesus of Na-

zareth, the Saviour of the world. To dispute the Christian records is to call in question a great body of contemporaneous history, written by enemies as well as friends, of whose honesty as historians there is no ground for suspicion, but the strongest argument in favor.

The language of Gœthe is substantiated by the known facts. "The mighty power of these books and their accounts has been tested and proved. They have overcome Paganism; they have conquered Greece, Rome and barbarous Europe; they are on the way of conquering the world. And the sincerity of the authors is no less certain than the power of the books. We may contest the learning and critical sagacity of the first historians of Jesus Christ; but it is impossible to contest their good faith. It shines from their words; they believed what they said; they sealed their assertions with their blood."

THE WITNESS OF THE BIBLE ITSELF

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (II. Peter 1:21.)

CHAPTER III.

THE WITNESS OF THE BIBLE ITSELF.

The Apostle Peter, in the second letter ascribed to him, makes the following distinct declaration: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The revised version of this remarkable verse is slightly different, as follows: "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." Dean Alford has presented still another translation in the words: "For prophecy was never sent after the will of man; but men had utterance from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit."

These slightly varying versions serve to bring out more clearly the important truth stated by the writer, that the prophetic Scripture is not of human, but of divine, origin; that it is not the expression of the unaided thought

and the uncontrolled will of man, but it is the thought of God, finding expression through human lips indeed, but lips which were under the guidance and inspiration of the Divine Spirit. "Holy men of God" (men who were chosen by God for the purpose, and whose spirits were brought into subjection to his Holy Spirit) "spake as they were moved" (borne along, carried onward, as a ship by the wind) "by the Holy Ghost"; that is, as they were impelled by the breath of the Almighty.

This declaration has reference, of course, to the Old Testament Scriptures. But whoever is persuaded of the doctrine of inspiration with reference to the earlier part of the Bible, will have no hesitation in accepting it as applicable to the New Testament, to the writers of which Christ promised the presence and aid of the same Holy Spirit to guide them "into all the truth."

A revelation having such an origin, and given in such a manner, would be expected to bear upon it some distinguishing marks, to have about it certain discoverable evidences of its supernatural character. What are some of the evidences found in the Bible itself in favor

of its claims to be of divine origin, and which make it worthy of the faith which intelligent men have reposed in it for eighteen hundred years?

A distinction is sometimes made between the inspiration of the Bible and the inspiration of the men who wrote the Bible. It is said that it was the writers who were inspired, and not the writings. This distinction has been insisted upon sometimes for the purpose of denying to the Scriptures any special divine character and authority. This seems very much like a distinction without a difference, when we consider its practical bearing upon the trustworthiness of the contents of the Sacred Volume. If the men themselves who wrote, whether history, or prophecy, or doctrine, were truly under the influence of the Divine Spirit, the products of their pens must show the evidences of that influence. A divinely inspired man must give utterance to a divinely inspired message, especially when the very object of his inspiration was the delivery of the message he was to utter.

Inspiration is not revelation, though the two may go together, and undoubtedly often do. But it is divine guidance and superintendence

in the expression of truth for great moral ends, whatever may be the kind of truth, so that what is expressed shall be truth and not error, and therefore shall be worthy of confidence. There will, of course, remain the human element, by which is meant not the admixture of error in the original composition, but the personal characteristics of the writers in style and mode of expression. The writers of the books of the Bible were not machines, mere phonographs to give out exactly words and phrases and tones which had been taken in. Moses and Isaiah, Paul and John, were unlike, and their unlikeness appears in their written productions; but it did not prevent them from being "moved by the Holy Ghost," and expressing the truths which the Spirit of God wished to communicate to men.

Again, it has been said that the Bible was not intended to teach historic truth and scientific truth, and that it is to be accepted as authority only in matters of morals and religion. It is true that the phenomena of nature, when referred to, are described in the popular language of the time, as they are to-day, and not in the language of exact science. We speak of

the rising and the setting of the sun, though we know better, without any fear of being charged with falsehood or inaccuracy of statement. Another has said: "A revelation from God in our human language must use the modes of speech, scientific, literary and even religious, which men commonly employ at the time when its writers are living. It can do nothing else. The attempt to do otherwise would awaken suspicion."

It is also true that the primary aim of the Bible is to unfold the moral character of God, his perfect attributes, his righteous standard of life, and his purpose of redemption for lost men who have come short of that perfect standard. But that unfolding has been in connection with human history, and goes back to the origin of man and the creation of the world. It could hardly fail to weaken faith in the Word of God as the product of divinely inspired men if it were discovered to be full of myths and legends, presented as facts, and of historical inaccuracies (making necessary allowance, of course, for errors of transcription), and if, when it speaks upon scientific matters, it should utter clearly and positively teachings which are

found to be contradicted by the established discoveries of advancing science. The newly discovered facts of science, which are proved to be facts, may compel us to modify our fallible interpretations of the Scriptures, as, for instance, in reference to the length of the creative day. That is now commonly regarded as a period of indefinite duration, or else the first chapter of Genesis is interpreted pictorially, the account of the creation being given as it would have appeared to an eye-witness. Either interpretation is allowable, and keeps the record in harmony with scientific facts. Mr. Gladstone thinks the "days" may be properly described as "chapters in the history of creation," and presents very plausible arguments for his opinion.

"God's works and God's word," if they have proceeded from the same hand, cannot be contradictory. They must be, so far as they touch upon the same themes, the harmonious revelations of the Infinite Mind. That they have been made to appear contradictory is explained by Principal Dawson in these words: "One fruitful cause of difficulty in the relation of science and religion is to be found in the narrowness and incapacity of well-meaning Chris-

tians, who unnecessarily bring the doctrines of natural and revealed religion into conflict, by misunderstanding the one or the other, or by attaching obsolete scientific ideas to Holy Scripture, and identifying them with it in points where it is quite non-committal. Much mischief is also done by a prevalent habit of speaking of all, or nearly all, the votaries of science as if they were irreligious. A second cause is to be found in the extravagant speculations indulged in by the adherents of certain philosophical systems. Such speculations often far overpass the limits of actual scientific knowledge, and are yet paraded before the ignorant as if they were legitimate results of science, and so become irretrievably confounded with it in the popular mind."

The facts of ethnology, which is a science of recent date, have been found to be in wonderful harmony with the Word of God. An eminent professor in an English university has declared: "There is no document in the world that contains so much information as to early human races as the tenth chapter of Genesis." The same harmony can be affirmed of the facts of geology. The story of the creation, the intro-

duction of cosmic light preceding the formation of sun and stars, and the distinct steps in the orderly process from the appearance of vegetable life to the appearance of human life, which was the crowning act of creative energy, are in remarkable accord with the accepted deliverances of science. Says Professor Silliman: "Every great feature in the structure of the planet corresponds with the order of events narrated in the sacred history." It needs to be borne in mind that the aim of the story of the creation was not scientific at all, but moral and spiritual, viz.: to show the exalted place of man in the creation, to furnish a never-to-be-forgotten basis for the institution of the Sabbath, and to proclaim to the world a pure monotheism, and the priority of God, the infinite Spirit, the beneficent Creator, over all forms of matter and orders of life. The story was told in a way to impress most deeply these great truths upon the minds of the race, without special regard to scientific detail. To accomplish this end it might not have been necessary to observe even the general order of creation. Yet the fact that it is observed in the story may well excite our wonder and arouse our inquiry.

When this spiritual aim is borne in mind, the first chapter of Genesis will be seen to be the sublimest utterance in human language.

Dr. Charles W. Shields, in "The Scientific Evidences of Revealed Religion," says: "Here in this oldest of books is an order of creation which modern geology verifies, and based upon it is a calendar of historic time which has supplanted successively the calendars of Egypt, Assyria, Greece and Rome, which still rules the highest civilization of our day, and which governs every week of your life and mine."

The record is absolutely free from the inharmonies, the puerilities, the absurdities of other nations. It is graphic, dignified, theistic, sublime, and antedated the formulated teachings of science by thousands of years. What is the explanation of this remarkable phenomenon? How could a man, unaided by the Spirit of the Creator himself, have written such an accurate outline of the geologic history of the universe at that early period of human development?

Another has said: "How came the writer of this account by such a doctrine of the origin of things? Here is a phenomenon in literature,

in the history of the human mind, that the skeptic must account for. Moses knew nothing of geology; perhaps he did not even apprehend the full meaning of that which he recorded as a vision of the six days. How came it to pass that, in that far antiquity, he laid down a basis of the creation which is in such wondrous harmony with that which science now reveals? . . . How was it that he avoided the errors and extravangancies of other systems, and gave with such severe simplicity a description of the creation, which for popular uses no rhetoric could improve and no science gainsay? It will not meet this question to bring down the date of the composition of Genesis, as Ewald proposes, to the time of Solomon, for the physical history of the globe, as now deciphered by geology, was not comprehended in the wisdom of Solomon, and the record that lay hidden in the rocks was no more suspected then than when Moses wandered in the rocky wilderness of Sinai. Besides, at that period, we find no improvement in the prevalent conception of the origin of the universe; but comparing the narrative in Genesis with the cosmogony of Homer and Hesiod, we are still compelled to

ask, *whence* came that unique, exact, sublime account of the creation contained in this book?"

It was in view of the marvellous agreement between the results of scientific investigation and the ancient Scriptures of our faith that Professor Dana exclaimed: "The grand old book of God still stands, and this old earth, the more its leaves are turned over and pondered, the more it will sustain and illustrate the Sacred Word." We may quote again from Prof. Charles W. Shields: "Only the young and crude sciences wrangling among themselves are at seeming variance with the Scripture. The older, more complete sciences are already in growing accord with it. . . . When the chief authorities in any science are found favoring such harmony; when its established truths already illustrate it, and its hypotheses can be hopefully adjusted toward it; and when all the sciences are seen taking this general direction according to their different stages of advancement, we gain new evidence of revelation, the highest, perhaps, that can be afforded. It is science itself becoming an unwitting, and sometimes an unwilling, witness at the bar of Omniscience. It is evidence which is strictly

scientific in its logical quality and force, since it is derived from the facts of nature, as agreeing with the truths of Scripture. In this age of arts and sciences it is as timely as the evidence yielded in the age of miracles and prophecies. It meets the modern scientist seeking wisdom, as that evidence met the ancient Jew requiring a sign."

This brief reference to a subject on which volumes have been written, is all that our plan will permit.

We pass now to suggest some of the characteristics of the Bible which go to establish its divine origin.

(I). The first characteristic which we name, which has been generally acknowledged, and which all critical study confirms, is its significant unity. The Bible is composed of many parts; indeed, it is not a book, but a library. It was written in different languages, by many different men of different temperaments, in places widely separated, and in ages remote from each other, covering a period of fifteen hundred years. These parts appeared at different periods of the world's civilization, and at different centres of thought and culture, in

Syria, in Macedonia, in Greece, and in Italy. This last fact cannot be too strongly emphasized. A literature partakes uniformly of the characteristics of the time in which it is produced; a philosophy discloses traces of the national traits amid which it is born. Yet, through all the books of the Bible, there are manifest a singular unity of purpose, oneness of spirit, and resemblance of thought which seem to point conclusively to a single guiding and superintending mind.

There is confessedly progress in the unfolding of truth, the Old Testament preceding the New, not only in point of time, but as the dawning of the morning precedes the noonday, as prophecy precedes the fulfilment. There were preparatory stages, made necessary in the judgment of God by human conditions, and by the nature of the truth to be unfolded. One reason for the late advent of Jesus Christ was that the world might have full proof of the insufficiency of its wisdom for the regeneration and salvation of men, for their emancipation from ignorance and sin. Christ came in the fulness of time. "For after that in the wisdom of God (that is, by the wise arrangement of

God in the predetermined delay) the world by its wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching (the Gospel) to save them that believe." And even when Christ had come, he revealed his truth to his disciples only as they were able to bear it. There was progress of doctrine, the gradual development of truth, not only in the passing from the Jewish to the Christian Scriptures, but in the Christian Scriptures themselves. But truth in the early stages was not as incomplete as some men are wont to think, and truth in its final revelation has left nothing to be desired.

But development is not contradiction. Through it all there is the unity of an unfolding life, the expression of a supreme purpose, the presence of a guiding Spirit speaking through different lips and many pens, and binding all together, history, psalm, prophecy, biography and epistle into one consistent, homogeneous book. It is certainly a marvel in literature, and can be accounted for only upon the supposition of the operation of a single enlightening and controlling divine Spirit.

"Whence but from heaven could men unskilled in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths?"

(II). A second characteristic of the Bible which bears witness to its divine origin is its exalted doctrine of God. Nowhere among the sacred books or beliefs of other nations can be found such a conception of Deity as in the Bible, so pure, so holy, so loving, so spiritual, so worthy of the worship of intelligent moral beings, so perfect in all his attributes and so infinite in all his perfections. It is utterly unlike the gross, cruel, immoral, semi-human and semi-fiendish pictures of the gods of all other nations. How did it happen that the God of the Jews stood in such striking contrast with the gods of all their neighbors, Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and even with the gods of cultured Greece and imperial Rome, as well as with the gods of the aboriginal inhabitants of all lands? It is obviously irrational to suppose that it was an evolution working up from animism through spiritism, polytheism, and various forms of idolatry, until at last it reached a pure monotheistic faith; for the tendency of religion among the Jews, as among other peoples, was always to work down instead of working up, and to lapse into open idolotry and ever grosser conceptions of Deity,

a tendency which was overcome only by constant divine interpositions. Ethnic religions do not purify themselves. The reverse is true. The history of the Jewish nation furnishes a conspicuous illustration of the degenerating force which is ever active in national and personal life, in religious beliefs and in moral principles, and which is not always successfully resisted by an authoritative revelation and a divinely prescribed standard of righteousness.

The opinions of men are divided to-day as to whether heathen religions are steps forward or steps backward, evidences of the religious nature of man reaching out after a higher conception of God than it has attained, or satisfying itself with a low and degrading conception of Deity to which it has fallen. The apostle Paul found it necessary to utter himself distinctly and at some length on this question. "Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man,

and to birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things." That is the inspired apostle's interpretation of the origin of atheism and idolatry. In his judgment they were departures from a purer primitive faith.

Undoubtedly the conception of God under the teaching of Christ was enlarged and enriched; but in the Old Testament it was peculiarly lofty and spiritual, and far surpassed the teachings of other religions in this respect, as the study of comparative religion abundantly proves. Take the very first utterance of the book of Genesis, and notice how wonderfully comprehensive and sublime it is. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "This simple sentence," says Dr. J. G. Murphy, "denies atheism, for it assumes the being of God. It denies polytheism, and among its various forms, the doctrine of two eternal principles, the one good and the other evil, for it confesses the one Eternal Creator. It denies materialism, for it asserts the creation of matter. It denies pantheism, for it assumes the existence of God before all things, and apart from them. It denies fatalism, for it involves the freedom of the Eternal Being."

Who taught this great teacher and historian of the Jewish people? How happened it that he stood alone, among founders of religious systems, in giving utterance to this exalted and pre-eminently spiritual doctrine of God, a doctrine which his Jewish successors in the prophetic office clothed with all wisdom, righteousness, mercy and truth? Even the Old Testament contains, at least in germ, every conception of God which the New Testament unfolds. It is full not only of his power and justice, but of his gentleness and grace, in dealing with his sinning creatures; for it says, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" (which is only an old statement of the modern doctrine of heredity), but at the same time says "forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." The Jewish Scriptures are not silent in reference to the doctrine of the divine Fatherhood. Psalmist and prophets foreshadow the fuller revelation of Christ. Indeed, it may be said that all through the Bible there looms up, resplendent and attractive, the unique truth of God's spiritual Fatherhood, a truth often perverted and made the basis of unscriptural and fatal inferences, but which neverthe-

less contains the very heart of divine revelation.

In a word, where else are we taught, among the philosophies or the religions of men, that the infinite and holy God takes men into filial relations with himself, or that he is a shepherd in his care, provisions and defence of those who trust him, or that he is "spirit" and "light" and "love," to use the three comprehensive and striking definitions of the Supreme Being, given to us by the Apostle John? What is this but God's revelation of himself, his nature and his relations to men, in his inspired Word? Unless we acknowledge this authorship of the revelation, how can we place confidence in these distinguishing truths which set it apart from all human literature?

(III). In close connection with its exalted doctrine of God is the person and character of Jesus Christ, whose unique and perfect portrait is found in the Bible, and separates it from all other biographical literature. Christ is the purpose and glory of all revelation. The older books are shot through and through with the prophecy of his coming, and with the minute details of his life and manifestation on earth.

The Gospels contain the marvellous stories, unlike, yet consistent and complemental, of his striking personality, his miraculous birth, his sinless and ideal character, his possession and exhibition of supernatural power, manifested over the forces of nature, and in the realm of evil spirits, his inculcation of the absolute truth concerning God and man, spiritual things and human duty and destiny, his sacrificial death upon the cross with its attendant miracles, and his glorious resurrection and ascension to heaven. It has been truly said that the fabrication of such a character and life would be as great a miracle as the fact of their actual existence. The later books of the New Testament, subsequent to the Gospels, contain the brief record of the early struggles, persecutions and triumphs of Christianity among both Jews and Gentiles, and the harmonious unfolding, and, when we consider the persons who wrote the books, the remarkable unfolding, of the teachings of Christ in doctrine and precept. All revelation seems to have had for its supreme object the getting of Christ before the eyes of men and into the faiths of men.

Christ, the subject of numerous and indis-

putable prophecies; Christ as a remarkable phenomenon in human history, his birth, life, death and resurrection being outside of the customary order of nature; Christ the ideal person, the typical man, and therefore, as another has said, "King of men," claiming at the same time to be "The Son of God" in a unique sense, so that he is "the only begotten Son of God"; Christ the teacher sent from God, the divinely endorsed and authoritative teacher of all truth in the realms of morals and religion; Christ the possessor and rightful wielder of all power in heaven and earth; Christ the voluntary ransom for the lost race of men, crucified in their behalf, his death having relation to divine law and human guilt, and his blood cleansing from all sin; Christ raised from actual death, and by that act "declared to be the Son of God with power," and now living at the right hand of God to make intercession for his followers—this is the extraordinary picture that confronts us in the Scriptures, and sheds its light and its glory over the whole body of revealed truth. And this picture has made the impression of truthfulness, of reality, of superhumanity upon most intelli-

gent minds in all the Christian centuries, and upon most acute thinkers and writers in the realms of philosophy, science, morals and religion.

Christ, as portrayed in the Bible, is above all suspicion of self-deception or imposture. His integrity is unimpeachable. His character and life are spotless. He is transparent truthfulness in thought and word and deed. When he claims to be "the way, the truth and the life," and the adequate manifestation of God to men, the whole world bows in unquestioning assent. Confessions innumerable, and from every quarter, might be cited as to the impression of his superhuman character and influence. Two or three must suffice, and these will be by men not likely to be accused of extravagant eulogy of the person of Christ. It was Channing who said, in a sermon on "The Inimitableness of Christ": "I believe Jesus Christ to be more than a human being. In truth, all Christians so believe him." Again he said: "He was what he claimed to be, and what his followers attested. Nor is this all. Jesus not only was, he is still, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world." It was Richter who said of Christ:

"He is the purest among the mighty, the mightiest among the pure, who, with his pierced hands, has raised empires from their foundations, turned the stream of history from its old channel, and still continues to rule and guide the ages." It was Herder who said: "Jesus must be looked upon as the first real fountain of purity, freedom and salvation to the world." The familiar words of Rousseau, taken from his "Emile," are: "Yes, if the life and the death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of God." Charles Lamb is reported, in a company of literary men, to have differentiated the exalted character of Christ from all human beings in this striking manner: "If Shakespeare should enter this room, we should all rise spontaneously; but if Jesus Christ should enter, we should all kneel." The one would receive the tribute due to genius; the other the homage due to Divinity.

Such language reveals the admiration which men in all circles of thought have felt for the unique character of Christ, and expresses, whatever discount may be made on its literal meaning, the exceptional tribute of praise which

they have been constrained to give to the influence of that character upon the moral life of men and the history of nations. The point made here is this—a book that contains the portrait and teachings of such a Person, bears upon its face irresistible evidence that it is of more than human origin. So long as the Bible has Jesus Christ in it, it must be believed to be from God.

(IV). A fourth characteristic of the Sacred Scriptures, that lifts them out of the range of purely human literature, and confirms the belief that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," is the presence in them of prophecy, a large amount of which is known to have been fulfilled. Prophecy is the foretelling of future events; it may be years or centuries before they come to pass. Not all prophets were prophets in this sense. Some were simply preachers of righteousness. The utterance of prophecy may seem to be the wild imagining of a fervid mind, and for years may have no evidential value. The fulfilment of prophecy makes it complete, and converts it into real and valid testimony, and proves conclusively that the prophet was speaking under

the illumination of the Divine Spirit, that he was endowed with a prescience that must have been imparted to him by God. Fulfilled prophecy is evidence of the strongest kind; indeed, it is absolutely incontrovertible as to the origin of its inspired utterance.

Moreover, it is evidence that is accessible to all, that is addressed to the senses, that is visible to the eyes, that is open to examination, that is verifiable by ordinary men. We must deny the reality of the prophetic utterance, and refuse to believe that it was spoken at the date specified, and bring it forward to a time posterior to the supposed fulfilment and conform it to the occurrence in its details, and then declare that a prior date has been fraudulently given to it (this is what is being attempted with not a few of the prophecies of the Old Testament), or we must admit the supernatural element in it, and acknowledge that God himself has spoken by the mouth of his servant.

The weight of the evidence from prophecy, and the important place which it holds in the argument for the divine origin of the Bible, can be appreciated by those only who have made themselves familiar by careful and prolonged

study with its abundance, and with the wide and varied scope of its application. The subject can be treated here only in barest outline and the most general manner.

These Biblical prophecies which have been accurately and unquestionably fulfilled, refer not only to the Jews, among whom they were spoken, but to other contemporary peoples, cities and empires, to Babylon, and Tyre, and Egypt, to the empires of Chaldea, Persia, Macedonia and Rome, as well as to the cities of Judea and the future of the Jews, prophecies not equivocal and uncertain and mysterious, like a Delphic oracle, but clear and positive in utterance and minute in detail, and which were fulfilled with astonishing accuracy in all particulars. To read them now after the events foretold seems like the reading of veritable history.

Reference has already been made to the fact that Christ was the subject of much prophecy. There are not less than three hundred distinct predictions, scattered from Genesis to Malachi, giving the particulars of the time, place and circumstances of his nativity, of his life, sufferings, death and resurrection, of his per-

sonal character and the purpose of his mission on earth, as well as the nature and extent of his dominion. All this is told with a fulness and definiteness which leave no room for doubt that the brilliant prophetic rays were focused on him. Christ himself and his apostles constantly acknowledged the meaning of the ancient prophecies, and recognized their actual, living fulfilment in him. The New Testament narrative is frequently punctuated by the refrain: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet."

Moreover, Christ was the author as well as the subject of many prophecies. By prophecy, as well as by miracle, he established his divine character and mission. He predicted his own betrayal and death and resurrection, the coming of false Christs, the persecution of his disciples, the overthrow of Jerusalem when as yet there was no sign of the coming storm, explaining in graphic outline the method of its siege, the unparalleled tribulation of the inhabitants, and the complete destruction of the city and temple, so that one stone should not be left upon another, and also the dispersion of the Jews among all nations. All of these events

have literally come to pass in the eyes of the whole world.

These are some of the many themes on which the spirit of prophecy spoke, and these are the many and indubitable evidences that it was the foreseeing God who spoke in his Scriptures, and foretold the coming of his Son to earth, and outlined the future of nations, of cities and of men.

(V). One more characteristic of the Bible which is proof of its high origin must have mention here, viz.: the excellence and superiority of its ethical teachings. The whole Bible is noticeably pervaded with a pure moral tone from beginning to end, and an ethical doctrine so clear, and positive, and unmistakable that the Christian standard of morality has been accepted as the highest standard of the moral nature of man, and the most perfect expression of the moral nature of God. The Bible in its record of human history and biography gives impartially the record of national and personal sin, even among God's chosen people and in the conspicuous cases of his professed followers, but never in a way to approve of immorality or condone wrongdoing. It offers par-

don and peace with God to sinful men, however wicked, but always upon condition of repentance, godly sorrow and genuine reformation. Whatever may be said of the necessity of moral education and progress in ethical training in the early ages, and the accommodation of moral teaching to the ignorance and hardness of men's hearts, subjects which it is not necessary here to discuss, the ideal of righteousness was never obscured. Men were to be holy as God is holy, and the whole aim of revelation was to make sin repulsive and odious, and to commend virtue and clothe it with an irresistible beauty and attractiveness.

Moreover, the morality of the Bible is not a mere negative or superficial morality, like the morality approved by the world and inculcated by other religions, but a positive, heart-searching, active morality, which consists not only of prohibitions, but of commandments, not only of "Thou shalt nots," but of "Thou shalts." It recognizes the fact that all sin is disobedience to God and is moral defilement. "Against thee, thee only I have sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean." It requires not

only outward obedience but inward purity. He that is angry against his brother, and cherishes lust in his heart, is guilty of murder and adultery. It demands not only abstinence from all evil, but the cheerful and perpetual doing of good. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself."

The moral teaching of the Bible, could it have supreme and universal sway, would make absolutely perfect the life of man, of the family and of society. The Bible teaches not only by precept, but by living example as well. It presents not only a code, but a life; the perfect code illustrated in the perfect life. Let that code be illustrated in the lives of men to-day, and the result would be the same. Man would be morally perfect in himself, and perfect in all his relations. This high, this ideal, this perfect ethical standard is not only claimed for the Bible by Christian teachers, but is accorded to it by moralists, philosophers and infidels. Franklin said: "I think Christ's system of morals and religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw, or is ever likely to see." Matthew Arnold said: "The true God is, and

must be, pre-eminently the God of the Bible, the Eternal who makes for righteousness." John Stuart Mill called Christ "the ideal representative and guide of humanity." Rousseau asked: "Where could Jesus learn among his compatriots that pure and sublime morality of which he only hath given us both precept and example"? Where, we repeat, except as he and his Father were one, and the morality of the Bible, of which Christ's teaching was a consistent part, and Christ's life a beautiful illustration, was the expression, under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, of the moral nature of God?

There are other characteristics of the Bible, which bear witness to its divine origin and character; as, for example, its accurate portraiture of man, his origin and moral condition, the adaptability of the Gospel to human needs, and its authoritative revelation of immortality. These topics may properly receive consideration in a chapter which follows this, entitled, "The Testimony from Christian Experience." But whoever carefully reflects upon the points which have been presented in this chapter, viz.: the unity of the Sacred Scriptures, the trans-

cendent doctrine of God revealed in them, the marvellous person and life of Jesus Christ, the existence of numerous remarkable prophecies and their literal fulfilment, and the moral teaching of this venerable Book, the most recent parts of which are nearly two thousand years old, and yet which human society with all its enlightenment and progress has not attained unto, and can never expect to outgrow, will find it impossible to believe that this Book is of human origin, but will, on the other hand, reverently and gratefully acknowledge that it is truly the Word of God, and that in its composition "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Professor Margoliouth, Professor of Arabic in the University of Oxford, in his remarkably able and erudite volume, "Lines of Defence of the Biblical Revelation," in which he treats in a fresh and masterly manner some of the vital questions of Biblical criticism, for example, the early date of the books of the Bible, the genuineness of the Book of Daniel, the unity of the Book of Isaiah, and, in general, the divine origin and trustworthiness of the Hebrew Scriptures, in opposition to the destructive crit-

icism of our time, proves conclusively the utter incompetency of the Jewish people to create their remarkable literature without divine inspiration and guidance. After showing in the most striking way their complete lack of originality and creative genius, he asks: "How are we to reconcile with this most patent want of originality the extraordinary phenomenon of such a race having produced a literature which, after having once taken its place at the head of the literature of the world, has no intention of quitting that post? The lost literatures that come to light rarely have any value of their own. Egypt and Assyria produced monuments which were long lost, but now are found and deciphered. Who reads them, except out of mere curiosity, or to aid him in some other study? Indian literature is now as easy of access as Greek, but who cares for it? One or two isolated morsels, perhaps, are known beyond professional circles, but nothing else. The Bible itself explains this problem by the theory that the best Israelitish literature was communicated to its authors from *without,* that it was the result of special favors conferred on privileged members of the race.

'Men spake as they were moved.' The nation, which of itself could do nothing for science or philosophy, which could not observe and could not experiment, which could not compile a grammar nor invent a metre, produced the books which, owing to the profoundity of their contents, 'the first man did not know fully, and the last man has not sounded to the bottom.' Truly, this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

THE PROOF FROM MIRACLES

"Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake." (John 14: 11.)

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROOF FROM MIRACLES.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, in "Literature and Dogma," says of miracles: "For it is what we call the *Time-Spirit* that is sapping the proof from miracles—it is the 'Zeit-Geist' itself. Whether we attack them, or whether we defend them, does not much matter; the human mind, as its experience widens, is turning away from them. And for this reason, it sees, as its experience widens, how they arise. It sees that, under certain circumstances, they always do arise; and that they have not more solidity in one case than another. Under certain circumstances, wherever men are found, there is, as Shakespeare says:—

> No natural exhalation in the sky,
> No scape of nature, no distemper'd day,
> No common wind, no customed event,
> But they will pluck away his natural cause,
> And call them meteors, prodigies, and signs,
> Abortives, presages, and tongues of heaven.' "

Again he says in the same book and chapter, the title of the chapter being "The Proof from Miracles": "Our point is, that the objections to miracles do, and more and more will, without insistence, without controversy, make their own force felt, and that the sanction of Christianity, if Christianity is not to be lost along with its miracles, must be found elsewhere."

Yet Mr. Arnold, in spite of his confidence that a belief in Christian miracles will disappear of itself, without attack, before the advancing experience of men, feels called upon to make a severe and prolonged attack upon them, ascribing them to a legendary origin and "to the liability of the New Testament writers to make mistakes" in their records.

Goldwin Smith, in his preface to "Guesses at the Riddle of Existence," asserts that "Liberal theologians have at least half resigned the belief in miracles, rationalizing whenever they can, and minimizing where that process fails. Liberal theologians, and even theologians by no means ranked as liberal, if they are learned and open-minded, have given up the authenticity and authority of Genesis. With these they must apparently give up the fall, the re-

demption and the incarnation. After this, little is left of the ecclesiastical creeds for criticism to destroy."

It is only necessary to call attention, in passing, to the ungenerous and discourteous insinuation, "if they are learned and open-minded," to which such critics allow themselves to condescend. Those only are open-minded who agree with them. In the body of the book Mr. Smith expresses himself in similar language. "The incarnation, it will be observed, is the centre of this whole circle of miracles. Without it they can hardly be said to have a purpose or a meaning. But since our rejection of the authenticity and authority of the Book of Genesis, the purpose and meaning of the incarnation itself have been withdrawn. If there was no fall of man, there can be no need of the redemption. If there was no need of the redemption, there can have been no motive for the incarnation. The whole ecclesiastical scheme of salvation, with all its miraculous appurtenances, falls to the ground."

If this argument is true and valid, it may be said that the converse is also true and valid, viz.: if there was a fall of man, there was a

need of redemption. If there was a need of redemption, there was a sufficient motive for the incarnation, and for "the whole circle of miracles," of which the incarnation is "the center." Therefore, the whole "scheme of salvation, with all its miraculous appurtenances," is unshaken.

Mr. Smith still further adds: "The Jews were further prepared for the acceptance of fresh miracles by their traditional acceptance of those of the Old Testament. So devoid were they of any conception of natural law, or of anything, except a direct action of Deity, that with them a miracle would hardly be miraculous"—a statement utterly inconsistent with the profound impression which the recorded miracles of Christ made upon the minds of those who beheld them, so that they called them "signs and wonders and mighty deeds."

Andrew D. White, in "A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology," says: "The world is hardly beyond the beginning of medical discoveries, yet they have already taken from theology what was formerly its strongest province, sweeping away from this vast field of human effort that belief in miracles which

for more than twenty centuries has been the main stumbling-block in the path of medicine; and in doing this they have cleared higher paths not only for science, but for religion." He constantly intimates throughout his elaborate volumes that as science advances and as religion advances, there will be no room for a belief in the supernatural; indeed, that such a belief is of the nature of a primitive superstition. To this conviction some prominent writers and interpreters of the Holy Scriptures have already professedly come. A denial of the supernatural means a rejection of miracles —both those of the Old Testament and those of the New, as having any historical or evidential value.

Moreover, it should be said that even among those who still hold to a belief in miracles, it is sometimes held in an apologetic, timid and half-hearted way; the holders, as Goldwin Smith says, "rationalizing wherever they can, and minimizing where that process fails," until in some quarters the question of miracles is passed over as lightly as possible, and little or no emphasis is laid upon them as an essential part of the Christian system. In a religious

journal claiming to represent a large evangelical denomination of Christians, there appeared recently a review of John W. Chadwick's "Biography of Theodore Parker," in which it was said: "For his (that is Parker's) share in the liberation of the mind from exaggerated and misplaced notions of the miraculous and the impossible doctrine of verbal inspiration, we may all join in a tribute of gratitude. We have reason to be glad that the incubus of infallibility is removed from faith in the inspiration of the Scriptures, that miracles are no longer misused as evidences of Christianity, nor necessarily defined as violations of natural law."

The perplexity of some minds in the treatment of miracles is manifest in the methods to which they resort to justify their lingering faith in them. A distinguished American clergyman and author, though disputing the record of some of the reported miracles of our Lord, still thinks that others must be accepted as worthy of credence. But he endeavors to bring them within the compass of a rational faith by effacing all distinction between nature and the supernatural. "We are coming," he

says, "to see that there is no distinction between the natural and the supernatural; that the natural is all supernatural, and that the supernatural is all most natural." Such language is the veriest quibbling, and would never be resorted to unless a man was ashamed of his little remaining faith in the supernatural element in Christianity, or was seeking to account for Christianity, its divine Person and its sublime teachings, by some theory of natural evolution. "The natural" and "the supernatural" are distinct terms with accepted and well understood meanings, and to wipe out the distinction between them is to abandon the Christian interpretation of nature in favor of the Pantheistic.

The quotations which have been cited from the more moderate, as well as the more advanced representatives of the school of so-called liberal thought, make apparent the necessity of a reconsideration of the place and value of miracles in the Christian system. This discussion will pertain not to the evidence for the genuineness and reality of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, but to the validity of the evidence which the miracles furnish to the

claims of Christianity upon the faith of men as a divine revelation. Of course, within the limits of this volume the discussion can be little more than a suggestive outline.

There are, in general, four ways in which the subject of Biblical miracles is treated.

First, there are those who deny not only the reality, but the possibility, of miracles, who reason *a priori* that the world is under the reign and operation of natural law, that a miracle would be a violation of some law or laws of nature, and that, therefore, God could not violate a law which he had made, else he would repudiate his own work and reveal his own imperfection, and thereby dethrone himself. This is the purely deistic argument. There is an established order of things, an order established by God at the beginning, and with which it is not only unreasonable to expect that God will interfere but impossible that he should interfere. The modern theory of evolution, though it may be held theistically; that is, though it may acknowledge the existence of God at the beginning of the visible universe, is by its own definition deistic in principle. It cannot consistently admit the introduction of

the supernatural element for any purpose whatever. It acknowledges the existence and operation of only "resident forces." It leads logically and inevitably to the denial of all miracles.

There are other persons who, while not denying the possibility of miracles, call in question their reality. They dispute the testimony which is offered in favor of them, one and all, and refuse to believe that any miracles have ever been wrought. Some so-called miracles are known to be spurious. They assert that all are such, and pronounce the record of them to be mythical and legendary. They have discovered "how they arise," and that "in certain circumstances they always do arise." And while they hesitate for the most part to declare that the writers of the New Testament records were guilty of intentional fraud, because such an accusation would be at once proved false by the high moral tone of their teachings, they profess to think it perfectly natural and reasonable that they were deceived, and fell into strange and fanciful errors of belief and of deliberate statement. Goldwin Smith uses the following words: "No man of comprehensive mind, unless it be Renan in his dealing with the

raising of Lazarus, has taken the miracles for creations of fraud. They are the offspring of a childlike fancy in a totally uncritical age. They are a halo which naturally grew round the head of the adored Teacher and Founder, as it grew round the head of every mediæval saint." The known critical and even skeptical character of Christ's disciples, and the lack of time requisite for such myths and legends to grow, before the Gospel narratives are known to have taken shape, seem to have but little weight upon the minds of these deniers of miracles. They find it easier and more agreeable to accept this interpretation of the biographies of Christ than to believe that the miraculous events recorded in them actually took place.

A third class of persons, while acknowledging both the possibility and the reality of miracles, the miracles contained in the New Testament, deny that they have any evidential value, that they are to be regarded as a criterion of revelation, that they have any weight in establishing the divine origin and claims of Christianity. Indeed, some persons have gone so far as to confess that in their judgment mir-

acles are "the dead weights" of Christianity. They admit that the Bible contains the record of unquestioned miracles, but are free to say that they stand in the way of the acceptance of Christian truth, instead of possessing a probative value, and that it would be better if the narration of the miracles had been omitted. It is this conviction that has led some writers to make the earnest and honest effort to establish the trustworthiness of the Christian religion entirely upon other grounds, and to preserve the Christian faith for this generation and subsequent generations in spite of the miraculous element in it. This disposition to pass by "the mighty works" of Christ, the exhibitions of superhuman power which were so frequent in his public ministry, and even to explain away the marvellous story of his incarnation, and the no less marvellous story of his resurrection, as if faith in these facts was not essential to the acceptance of Christianity, and to present exclusively the matchless personal character and life of Christ, his sayings, his parables, and the ethical beauty of the Gospels, is the result, in no small degree, of the tremendous influence of the study of the physical sciences in our day,

of the new conception of the sovereignty of law, and of the demand that everything must be accounted for upon naturalistic and scientific principles.

But the great body of Christians still, educated as well as uneducated, among whom are many of the ablest thinkers of our time, accept the well-authenticated miracles of the Bible as one criterion of revelation, as one convincing argument in favor of the Christian religion. There are other criteria and other arguments, each one having its own peculiar weight and filling its own place in the cumulative and irresistible series of proofs for the credibility, the trustworthiness, the divine character of Christianity. But it is not thought necessary, or desirable, or possible to set aside the evidential value of miracles. They have their place, and a most important place, among Christian evidences. They have been performed for great moral and spiritual ends. They have been incorporated inseparably in the Christian system. They form a natural and consistent part of divine revelation, and furnish confirmatory evidence of inestimable value to the origin and genuineness of the message of truth which

purports to have come to men from God.

It is possible that in former times too great emphasis was laid upon this kind of evidence, and that other forms of evidence received too little attention, and that now there should be a change of emphasis, and the greater stress should be put upon the resplendent character of Christ, the moral excellence of the Gospel and its adaptability to the spiritual needs of men, and even upon the progress of the Gospel and the nature and extent of its achievements, all of which bear their separate and united testimony to the greatness and divinity of the Christian religion, a testimony which has increased in volume with the passing centuries. But this is not saying that the miracles which accompanied the introduction of Christianity may now be ignored, and may be safely omitted in a discussion of Christian evidences.

It is undoubtedly true, as Mr. Lecky has said, that "there is no change in the history of the last three hundred years more striking or suggestive than that which has taken place in the estimate of the miraculous." But this change is almost exclusively limited to the interpretation of alleged modern miracles and

surprising phenomena, which formerly would have been ascribed to supernatural agency, but which are now traced to natural causes, or if such causes are not discoverable at present, the events are left unexplained, with the certain expectation that the progress of knowledge will bring to light a natural solution. Canon Mozley has well said: "The scientific era of the world has doubtless been an important period in the education of mankind; and with other parts of the mind of man, his belief in the marvellous has received an education." In other words, there has come to be an educated belief in the supernatural, more discriminating in its judgment and more exacting in its demands for positive evidence. But when Mr. Lecky infers from his statement of fact that this change has affected in any large degree the belief in New Testament miracles, or that with the decay of the tendency to ascribe modern marvels to supernatural agency the Christian belief is fast falling into decay, his inference is unwarranted. Christian miracles have been quite generally considered an exception, by reason of the character of the miracles themselves, the paramount purpose for which they

were wrought, the vital and consistent place which they hold in the Christian system, the spiritual lessons which they were evidently intended to convey, and the incontrovertible evidence in their support.

To pronounce dogmatic judgment against the possibility of a miracle would seem to be the height of unwisdom, if it can be shown that there is some worthy and lofty spiritual end to be accomplished by it. It would imply the possession of an absolutely perfect knowledge of "the order of nature," in which we live, and an absolutely perfect knowledge of the Supreme Being, and the methods and possibilities of his activity. Notwithstanding the great progress which has been made in scientific knowledge, man's knowledge of nature, of natural laws and forces, may be only in its infancy. And man's knowledge of God, what he can do and what he cannot do, is certainly finite, not to say infantile.

Who can say that a miracle is in any such sense a violation of natural law that God who ordained the law would by working the miracle deny himself and thereby dethrone himself? He might be simply changing the manner of

his activity, or if we may so speak, be suspending or counteracting one law by the introduction of another and a higher law. Men seem to be constantly doing this in their limited sphere and manner. Every time a man lifts an object in the air, he introduces a superior force, the force of his own will, over and above the law of gravitation, which would keep his arm at his side and the object on the ground. The law cannot be said to be broken or violated. It is simply counteracted, and for the moment rendered inoperative by the presence and agency of a superior force. It makes no difference that the counteracting agency is a natural agency. If man can counteract a law of nature, and may do so without sin, so may God. Dr. George P. Fisher says: "The human will affords the most striking illustration of the possibility of a miracle. The will, as related to material forces, is a distinct and higher power, and as thus related is supernatural. *It initiates movements in the realm of nature.* It produces results, countless in number and variety, which would not have come into being independently of its action."

Now, a miracle, instead of being a violation

of a law of nature in any immoral way, is simply the introduction or interposition of a higher power for some exalted moral end. This is the customary definition. Dr. Alvah Hovey says: "By a miracle we mean an event which, according to the principles of sound reasoning, may and must be referred to the extraordinary agency of God," or if by the co-operation of natural forces, "such forces are directed and reinforced by extraordinary divine action, which superior action determines the event." Mansel calls a miracle "an interposition of divine power." Dr. McCosh defines it as "an event which is wrought in our world as a sign or proof of God making a supernatural revelation to man." Dean Farrar describes it as "an effect wrought by the direct interposition of the Creator and Governor of nature for the purpose of revealing a message or attesting a revelation." And Dr. George P. Fisher says: "When a miracle occurs, a new cause intervenes, viz.: a special exertion of divine power, the power of the Creator and Upholder of nature. There is not even a violation of natural laws, in the proper sense of the phrase; for every statement of natural law, and every pre-

diction of what is to occur under it, is made with the *proviso,* or on the tacit supposition, that there is to be no intervention of a supernatural agent."

Again he says: "It is objected that a miracle would be a contravention by God of the laws of nature which he has himself established. Even were it so, the laws of nature are not *moral* laws. An interference with them would not involve in itself any moral wrong."

This definition is accepted by many of the most profound students of nature, who find in their faith in the reality of miracles nothing inconsistent with their scientific beliefs. Prof. William Elder, an able professor in natural science in one of our New England colleges, says, in a volume entitled "Ideas from Nature": "*Miracle is not impossible.* Only an atheist can consistently maintain that miracle is impossible; his inconsistency with nature lies in his being an atheist. The agnostic freely admits, 'I urge no claim of impossibility.' [He cannot deny the possibility of miracle, for he cannot consistently deny anything. All he can consistently do is to confess his utter and universal ignorance.] While that crude view

which regards the universe as a gigantic machine started ages ago, whose maker sits idly or helplessly apart, and sees it go, makes no claim on intelligence."

Again, Professor Elder says that while *"a world governed according to law is necessary for a miracle, . . . a miracle is not necessarily a violation of a law of nature.* It cannot be maintained that a miracle is a violation of a law of nature, and therefore impossible. So Hume defined it; but Huxley does not hesitate to point out his error. 'The definition of a miracle as a violation of the laws of nature is in reality an employment of language which, in the face of the matter, cannot be justified.' "

"We have experience of only a small portion of universal nature; we know a few of its laws, and of these our knowledge is but rudimentary. What appears to us exceptional action may be a part of the Creator's plan, a law of the universe as a whole, as truly as the regularity which we daily experience is his ordinary method of government in that small fraction of the universe which is the school of our earthly life, and in which it has pleased him to limit his ordinary action to these uniform

methods so that it may be a fit school. Much difficulty is removed when we clearly apprehend this fact that Christian miracles, events quite outside the known laws of our world, may yet be in perfect harmony with the unknown laws of the universe, of which our world forms so small a fraction."

The man who denies the possibility of miracles, then, not only assumes to know all the unknown laws and forces of the universe, but he also claims to know that when the universe and its laws were brought into being, God either exhausted himself or circumscribed his power and his activity; in other words, he shut himself out of the universe which he had created, and determined to let it alone—or else there is no transcendent God and no supernatural. A denial of miracles is, therefore, either a refusal to grant to the Creator a right and a power of interposition in the natural world which his creatures are in some measure exercising every day, or it is a denial of the existence of any law or force above the narrow world with which men are acquainted, and therefore a denial of the supernatural, which is a denial of the primary postulate of the highest philosophy

and of the deepest intuition of the human mind.

In establishing the credibility of miracles, three facts are important to be remembered.

First, there must be the most incontrovertible evidence. The miracle must be lifted above the reach of reasonable doubt or suspicion by the number and character of its witnesses. Not all professed miracles have been real miracles. The existence of the counterfeit always bears its testimony to the existence of the genuine. There is a marked difference between the miracles of the New Testament and those which the Roman Catholic Church has offered to the acceptance of its adherents, and, indeed, any alleged modern miracles, both in their character and the nature of their evidence. Evidence may be so strong, so consistent, so convincing that to doubt it would be more unreasonable than to accept the event. Hume's celebrated argument against the possibility of proving miracles by testimony has been answered many times, and not only by believers in miracles, but by unbelievers as well. Mill, as well as Huxley, has shown its weakness and errors. Mill has confessed that the evidence for the unbroken uniformity of nature is coun-

teracted by whatever weight belongs to the evidence for the miracle or miracles. To any man who believes in the immanence of God the weight of evidence for his interposition in any given instance may be sufficient to overcome completely the adverse evidence from nature's uniformity. Professor Fisher has said: "All that Hume has made out, as Mill explains, is that no evidence can prove a miracle to an atheist or to a deist who supposes himself able to prove that God would not interfere to produce the miraculous event in question. Mill adds truly 'that natural religion is the necessary basis of revealed; that the proofs of Christianity presuppose the being and moral attributes of God; that it is the conformity of a religion to those attributes which determines whether credence ought to be given to its external evidences.' "

Goldwin Smith, in his contribution to a recent volume, "The Progress of the Century," in which he discusses the progress of free thought, acknowledges that "Hume's argument against the credibility of miracles will hardly bear examination. Assuming the existence of God and his care for men as his work,

which Hume does not openly deny, there is no presumption against his revelation of himself in the only conceivable way, which is by an interruption of the general course of things; there is rather a presumption that he would so reveal himself. Nor can it be maintained that no degree of evidence, say that of a multitude of scientific men, after providing all possible safeguards against deception, would satisfy us of the fact." This acknowledgment may be classed with that of Mill and Huxley, and may be accepted as a satisfactory reply to Hume. But as a personal acknowledgment, after his treatment of the numerous, intelligent, honest, unimpeachable witnesses of Christ's miracles, already quoted, it has little value. It reminds one of the Scotchman who confessed himself willing to be convinced, but added he would like to see the man who could convince him.

Secondly, the reality of one miracle, proved beyond a reasonable doubt, establishes the possibility, not to say probability, of other miracles in the same system. Professor Elder affirms: "*Science accepts one miracle, creation.* When we inquire about the origin of matter and energy, of life and mind, we are compelled to

refer to creative acts other than those with which we are made familiar by what is seen of the operation of natural causes. . . . Evolution does not attempt to account for the origin of nature; that lies quite beyond its scope, and must be viewed as the direct act of God." This is not the conclusion of a theologian, but of a professional scientist. He also says: "The new creation of the human soul, the central event of human history, may fitly be classed with it."

But whoever may question these conclusions of the scientist, it would seem that no candid man can call in question the miraculous character of the person of Jesus Christ. He is the colossal, the unquestionable miracle of Christianity. No man has been able to classify him. No man has been able to bring him within the operation of merely natural causes. He stands alone, unique, absolutely unaccounted for upon any naturalistic theory. He is the towering personality of the ages. Mr. Griffith-Jones is constrained to acknowledge that "This fresh beginning in the career of humanity is in itself a miracle. There were no indications that such a fact was possible by means of the 'resident

forces' of the human heart, using the word 'resident' in its restricted sense; such an impulse must come from the spiritual environment acting on the soul; that is, by the descent of 'the power from on high.'" This one primary miracle of Christianity makes all the Christian miracles possible, and not only possible, but probable. The miraculous person must possess miraculous gifts and powers, and his life must be full of miraculous deeds. The reason expects it. Consistency demands it. The entire manifestation of Christ must be harmonious. A life begun in a supernatural birth must be continued in the exercise of supernatural powers, and end in a supernatural resurrection. The impression must be a unit, otherwise the sublime object of the manifestation would be defeated. Christianity, which centres in the divine Christ, is founded in miracle. The miraculous is inseparably connected with it. It seems impossible to believe in Christianity at all without believing in the miraculous.

President Rush Rhees says in "The Life of Jesus of Nazareth": "The evidence for the supreme miracle—the transcendent character of Jesus—is clear, and the miraculous element

in the story of his life must be considered in view of this supreme miracle. In association with him his miracles gain in credibility."

A serious mistake is often made in considering the Christian miracles as isolated occurrences, apart from the system of which they form an inseparable part, and apart from him upon whose unique person and character the whole system rests. Illingworth, in his recent volume, "Divine Immanence," says with great force: "But if the incarnation was a fact, and Jesus Christ was what he claimed to be, his miracles, so far from being improbable, will appear the most natural things in the world. For no one will deny that in this case he could have worked them, and when we look at them, it seems likely that he would, for they harmonize completely with his whole character and work—being mainly acts of charity and mercy, either to the bodies or the souls of men, and at the same time profoundly symbolical of spiritual truth. They are, indeed, so essentially a part of the character depicted in the Gospels, that without them that character would entirely disappear. They flow naturally from a person who, despite his obvious humanity, im-

presses us throughout as being at home in two worlds. Moreover, the possessor of these miraculous powers is described as tempted to misuse them. No one, who reads the account of the temptation, can suppose for a moment that it was related with any reference to the credibility of miracles. But for that very reason its indirect bearing on their credibility is great; for nothing can suggest more forcibly that the miraculous power was real than the statement, incidentally made, that it was the subject of temptation, with the further implication that, in many cases, it was consciously present, but unused. . . . There is a dignity, a beauty, a reserve of power, a restriction of use, a depth of spiritual insight, in the miracles attributed to Christ, which makes us feel that they are not merely congruous with his whole personality, but part of it. We cannot separate the wonderful life or the wonderful teaching from the wonderful works. They involve and interpenetrate each other, and form in their indissoluble combination one harmonious picture."

The beauty and freshness of this quotation are a sufficient justification of its length.

A third fact to be remembered in discussing the credibility of miracles is that the end and purpose of miracles must be worthy of the divine interposition, of the extraordinary display of supernatural power. They must have some moral and spiritual aim. They must be to authenticate some divine message, to recall some important truth that may have been forgotten under the unchanging order of nature, or to establish faith in some new truth that God may think necessary for the highest welfare of his creatures. To a world, therefore, in which by reason of sin the voices of nature and of conscience are unheeded or have proved inadequate, the miracle may be a necessity to awaken the slumbering moral sense, to remind men of a forgotten God, or to confirm faith in a new revelation of grace and power, which he may be pleased to make known to them. A foreseeing and benevolent God, anticipating the fall, the folly and the forgetfulness of his moral creatures, may have built, to use the words of another, "a universe so constituted as to welcome, now and then, a fresh impulse from the divine hand, a new display of sovereign power, proving to the awed spirit of men that God is

more than a principle of order, or causation, or development; that he is a holy and loving Father, greater even than the temple of nature."

The miracle, therefore, is not only not a violation of the laws of nature which the will of God has ordained, but it is a new and gracious expression of the will of a transcendent God, and a necessary appeal to the moral nature and faith of men in confirmation of the validity and trustworthiness of a message, on the acceptance of which the present well-being and eternal destiny of men depend. It has its necessity and place in the history of a lost world as part of God's greater plan for the spiritual guidance and redemption of mankind.

There have been three distinct periods in human history when miracles have been wrought, and when it seems that nothing but miracles would have accomplished the end which God had in view. In the time of Moses, when it was necessary to establish his leadership among the children of Israel, and lead them forth from bondage to the land of promise, God spoke by means of miracles. In the days of Elijah, when God would rescue his

chosen people from idolatry, and preserve through his endorsed ministry a monotheistic faith in the earth, God spoke by means of miracles. And then in the foundation of Christianity, the culmination of all previous religious teaching and the one universal spiritual religion, God spoke through miracles wrought by Christ and his apostles. Miracles accomplished then in a brief time what might otherwise have been impossible. The incarnation alone would not have been sufficient. This "invisible miracle," as Bishop Butler calls it, required to be proved by visible miracles. "Miracles," says Robert Hall, "were the bell of the universe which God rang to call men to hear his Son." Men by them were attracted to him, were led to acknowledge his divine claims, were established in their faith, were made competent witnesses to his truth, and went forth to the evangelization of the nations. Browning says of that time:

> "I say that miracle was duly wrought,
> When but for it no faith was possible."

In each of these three periods miracles have had a distinct and holy purpose, and have rendered an immensely important service. They

have brought God in an unusual and startling manner into human experience, and have impressed upon the forgetting and rebellious minds of men the thought of his sovereignty, his nearness and his grace. They have been the accompaniments of the proclamation of the divine will, the authentication of a divine revelation, and in some true sense a criterion of that revelation.

Miracles have not been continuous; if they had been, they would have ceased to be miracles, and would have dropped into the common experience of men, losing their power to impress the mind or to be of any evidential value to a special message or revelation. Their infrequency has given them worth and power, and, indeed, has made for their probability, if the moral emergency has been such as to demand them.

Christianity must undoubtedly depend today largely upon its own self-commending power to the intelligence, the moral sense and need of men, and upon that personal revelation which comes to every believing heart, when God graciously reveals his Son in it. The superior excellence of Christ's doctrine, and the

manifest superhumanity of his character, ought to be the sufficient criteria of the Christian revelation and to command the faith of men everywhere. There seems to be little or no need of fresh miracles at the present time in confirmation of Christianity, especially as we have the inspired record of its miraculous beginning, and the existence of organized Christianity, with its marvellous progress and triumphs, and its blessed and far-reaching fruits. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Yet the old and well-attested miracles may still have their place among Christian evidences, and their influence upon many minds, as they did in the days of Christ and his apostles, in the confirmation of faith in the Christian religion, and as the appropriate authentication of a divine revelation of truth and grace.

Dr. Richard S. Storrs has said in striking language: "The whole New Testament would become to me inharmonious in its proportions, timid in its challenge to the faith of the world, emptied of the ultimate majesty and lustre of Omnipotent Love, if there ever should be ex-

pelled from its tender and dauntless pages these sovereign demonstrations of the Divine Will, immanent in the person and illustrious in the action of him who as Christ claims unique authority in the world."

It is undoubtedly true that many of Christ's miracles were performed as a means of strengthening and rewarding a faith in him already exercised. Sometimes the unbelief of the multitude seemed to restrict his gracious activity, and he did not many mighty works in their community because of it. He never wrought his miracles as mere marvels, public exhibitions of supernatural power, to gratify an idle curiosity, or to minister to personal need, or attain any selfish end. Yet his miracle-working did make a profound impression upon the people, so much so that sometimes he was compelled to escape into retirement. There were not a few persons whose estimate of him, and whose belief in him, were determined by "the works of God" which were made manifest through him, as well as by the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.

The thoughtful and inquiring Nicodemus, himself a teacher of the Jews, confessed: "We

know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." The miracles of Christ were to him the satisfactory credentials as to his divine authority as a teacher of truth. We are told that "many of the people believed on him, and said, when Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" It was Christ's miracles that convinced them that he was the expected Messiah, and won their faith to him. And again it is said that "many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did." This was the argument which they could not gainsay or resist.

Moreover, it is evident that Christ himself appealed to his miraculous deeds in vindication of his high claim and in attestation of the divine origin of his message. When the once clear visioned, but now despondent John the Baptist, sent to Christ from prison, inquiring who he was, he replied: "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel

preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." These works of miraculous power, said Christ, are my sufficient credentials. I need say nothing more. Was Christ an honest man when he said he wrought miracles? Was it right and wise for him to refer to them as the criterion by which his person, his mission and his message should be judged?

Again, on one occasion, Christ rebuked the Jews, because they refused to accept the testimony of his miracles, and followed him simply to be fed. "Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." And on another occasion Christ distinctly said that he was going to work the miracle which he wrought in demonstration of the fact of his divine character and power and message—"That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, he saith to the sick of the palsy, arise."

What were the miracles of Christ, and what was their object? Deeds of charity and compassion for the relief of human suffering? Yes, many of them undoubtedly were. But they were more; they were the outward rep-

resentations of deep spiritual realities, as Pascal has said: "As nature is an image of grace, so the visible miracles are but the images of those invisible, which God wills to accomplish." And they were still more; they were "signs and wonders and mighty works," attestations of the divine origin and character of the Christian religion, indisputable proofs of the trustworthiness of the message and the reality of the revelation. "God also bearing them witness both with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."

A denial of miracles makes the Christian gospels a collection of legends and fables, Christ himself an unsubstantial myth, and Christianity, with all its glorious achievements, an empty dream. A refusal to accept them as corroborative of the Christian revelation is putting asunder what God hath joined together. Miracles are an integral part of Christianity. Christ and miracles stand or fall together. "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake."

THE TESTIMONY FROM CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

"And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 1 : 8.)

CHAPTER V.

THE TESTIMONY FROM CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

The disciples of Christ were to make known to men everywhere the great facts of his birth, his life, his death, his resurrection, and his return to earth, all that pertained to his unique and divine personality and to his redemptive mission on earth, as it had been unfolded to their open minds and receptive hearts. They were to be "witnesses unto him." But their testimony was to be more than the testimony of instructed lips. It was to be the testimony of personal experiences and changed lives. They were to preach the Gospel and to write epistles; but still more, they were to be "living epistles," whose testimony should be in harmony with the truth spoken by the lips and written by the pen. Christian doctrine was evermore to find its verification in Christian experience and its confirmation in Christian character. The words of Amiel are beautifully

and solemnly true: "Every life is a profession of faith, and exercises an inevitable and silent propaganda. As far as lies in its power, it tends to transform the universe and humanity into its own image. Thus we have all a cure of souls. Every man is a center of perpetual radiation, like a luminous body; he is, as it were, a beacon, which entices a ship upon the rocks, if it does not guide it into port."

It is a peculiarity of the truth of revelation that it cannot be fully apprehended by processes of reasoning, but must be brought to the test of personal experience in order to find its fullest vindication as a system of truth, divine in its origin and divinely adapted to the needs of men. Though a man may understand all miracles and all secular history, though he may be able to decipher the confirmatory inscriptions on all monuments, Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian, and may recognize the superiority of the Bible to all other sacred books, though he may reflect with wonder upon the signal triumphs which Christianity has achieved in the world, and yet have not experience, he has failed of the chief evidence in behalf of the divine authority and power of the religion of Christ.

As the Christian religion has for its aim not simply intellectual conviction, but the transformation of character, as it offers to men not simply certain great truths to be believed, but certain great principles to be lived, and certain great promises and hopes to be enjoyed, its ultimate appeal must always be to the experiences of men. This is its supreme test and its invincible proof that it is what it professes to be, and accomplishes what it claims to accomplish.

On the one hand, this is an embarrassment. Dr. Richard S. Storrs has truly said: "An embarrassment arises from the fact that the religion itself makes a personal spiritual experience of its power the only final evidence of it. 'Taste, and see that the Lord is good'; 'if any man be minded to do the will of my Father in heaven, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself'; these are consenting representative declarations from the older writings, and the later of what is called among us the Bible, which harmonize with many others in setting forth the fact that only by spiritual experiment of the Gospel can man be assured of its divine origin, as ultimate-

ly proved by its divine energy. All other impressions of this must be, in the nature of the case, preparatory, rudimental."

He illustrates this statement in the following beautiful and practical words: "Only by trying it do men find with what subtle and exquisite adaptation the air is fitted to the lungs, so that by inhaling it their life is reinforced. Only by joyful experience of it is such a certainty produced in the mind of the inestimable beauty of sunshine, as could have been formed, as can be shaken, by no argument conceivable. . . So it is only by trying Christianity, in its fitness to our deepest personal needs, of alliance with God, of moral renovation, of tranquillity and of hope, that men can become utterly certain that it is from above; not a fabric, any more than the earth is, of human fancy, or a construction of human logic, or even a brilliant and lofty surmise of human aspiration; but a divine system, as is the atmosphere, as is radiant light, presented by God to the world of mankind for their permanent sovereign life and peace."

On the other hand, this fact that experience is the supreme test of the truth of the Bible, is

an immense advantage to revealed truth, for it places its strongest and its best evidence within the reach of every man, however humble his ability, or meager his attainments, or deformed his life. The evidence from experience is open to everybody. All persons can put the Gospel of Christ to the test, and prove its power, its excellence, and its divine claims. It is not the weighing of arguments, the ability to apprehend or establish a system of doctrine, to construct and defend a body of divinity, but it is simply the application of truth to conscience and to life. Christianity says to every man, prove me now herewith, and see if I am not from God, by the fruits of personal faith and obedience, by the moral renovations which I produce, by the changed dispositions which I create, by the satisfying hopes and joys which I bring, by my ability to meet the profoundest needs, and answer the irrepressible longings of the immortal spirit.

As has been said, this is the best kind of evidence. It banishes all doubt. It is undisturbed by hostile argument. It is the evidence of personal experience. A man knows that grain is nourishing, because he has eaten it. A man

knows that the rays of the sun contain light and heat, because he has walked in their light and been warmed by their heat. His faith rests not upon testimony, but upon actual experiment. It has been converted into knowledge and life. In like manner a man knows that the Bible is divine, because it has kindled in his heart divine affections and aspirations, and a hatred for all that is evil and unlike God. He knows that it has come down from God, because it lifts him up to God. It may be said that no man is fully competent to sit in judgment upon Christianity until he has put it to the test of practical experience. He has certainly omitted one evidence of its divineness, which is higher and deeper than all others, and upon which Christianity especially relies for the proof of its true origin, as well as for the means of its progress.

President Ezekiel Robinson has said: "A religion to get itself established among men must satisfy some at least of the wants of the human soul. A religion which is to win for itself the confidence of men as of divine origin in a sense that no other is, and as having exclusive authority from God, must show itself

equal to a supply of every existing, and of every developed, need of every human soul. The Christian finds that no want of his soul, however deep, or subtle, or urgent, or progressively capacious, is unprovided for in Christianity. The more completely and the longer he tests its provisions, the more profoundly he becomes convinced of its divine origin and authority."

This evidence from experience, while it is the final evidence of the divine nature and power of Christianity, and the most convincing of all evidences, may be said also to be the primary evidence, without which a man cannot properly weigh other evidences. It puts him in a mental condition, in which he can feel the force of all arguments in favor of the inspiration of the Bible and the divine authority of its teachings. To quote again from President Robinson: "It, in fact, alone qualifies him for an appreciation of other evidences. He became a Christian not because outward evidences persuaded him, but because consciousness of inward want impelled him. This inward want once satisfied, the meaning and worth of outward evidences are easily under-

stood. They are invaluable as defences against outward assaults. Assailed by critics, he fortifies the outworks of his faith by evidences gathered from every available field of knowledge; but that which holds him in perfect peace and assurance of safety is the felt power of his faith in the personal and living Christ."

It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of personal experience in determining the value of religious truth. It was this more than the miracles of Christ and his apostles that established Christianity at the first as the religion come from God, and it is this that will carry it forward to its universal triumph. As men yield to its power and put its truths to this test, they will bow to its divinity with an unquestioning faith, and unhesitatingly confess that this religion of Christ is not of man or of human origination, but of God and his revealed grace. Then they will acknowledge, as did the villagers of Samaria: "Now we believe, not because of thy testimony, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." As is the laboratory in the study of science, so is experience in the study of religion.

The statement of Prof. Charles W. Shields is too strong as to the impotence of Christian evidences, but not too strong as to the confirmatory power of Christian experience. He says: "No man was ever led to Christ by the evidences of Christianity. No man cometh except the Father draw him, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. The testimony of miracles is complete in itself and conclusive, but the true ground of all rational conviction is in the truth as self-vindicatory, as testified in us by the Holy Spirit, and as perpetually re-established by the most endearing witnesses from our own experience."

We might refer to the cases of persons who have been openly wicked and immoral, bound fast in the iron chains of deadly sins until their recovery to lives of virtue and respectability seemed hopeless, and yet who have been suddenly and permanently emancipated by the power of Christian truth. These have been visible illustrations of Christ's saying: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." There have been many such in all these Christian years; profane men who have been made devout and prayerful; passionate and

cruel men who have become gentle and kind and loving; human tigers who have fed on bloodshed and cannibalism, who have been tranformed into inoffensive and lamb-like peoples; criminals who have abandoned their evil courses and have become good citizens and neighbors, honest, law-abiding and virtuous; intemperate men who have been made sober and industrious, good husbands and fathers; men in whom the grossest habits have been overcome, the most violent passions have been subdued and the most tyrannical appetites have been completely and forever eradicated from their natures. Such cases are sometimes called "miracles of grace"; and, indeed, they are, and their changed lives, dispositions and characters bear unmistakable testimony to the power of God working in them, and to the divinity of the faith of Christ, which has transformed them, and made them literally new creatures in him.

But it is not necessary to limit the thought to exceptional cases. All Christian experience bears uniform witness to the divine adaptability of saving truth. Every conversion, being the result of the direct activity of the divine Spirit, is of the nature of a miracle. It is not a viola-

tion of any known spiritual law; but it is the introduction of a new and living force, even the Almighty Spirit of God, to touch, to renew, to quicken, to change, to guide the spirit of man, and to bring it to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, and to a life of obedience and fellowship with God. The human spirit, being "born again," in the significant language of Scripture, is brought under the influence of a new and controlling heredity. "You hath he quickened (that is, made alive), who were dead in trespasses and sins." "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Vinet, a Christian writer not given to extravagant statement, said: "The greatest miracle that I know of is that of my conversion. I was dead, and I live. I was blind, and I see. I was a slave, and I am free. I was an enemy of God, and I love him. . . . Behold the miracle! And if God has been able to work that one, there are none of which he is not capable." Dr. A. J. Gordon, commenting on these words, used the following language: "If the force of this powerful confession be analyzed, it will be found to lie in two elements—the experimental

character of the evidence which it conveys, and the supernatural character of the experience which it records. To have been the witness of a miracle constitutes a great qualification for defending Christianity; but to have been the subject of a miracle constitutes a greater qualification. And such is the position of one who has been regenerated, and who has learned in his own life what it is to be delivered from the tendencies of an evil human nature, and to be made subject to the powerful impulse of the divine nature implanted by the Holy Spirit. In a word, conversion is the strongest, most universal and most polyglot evidence of Christianity which the Church can present to the world. Neander calls it 'the greatest of all miracles, the standing miracle of the ages'; and because this witness to Christ is a perpetual one, not to be remanded to the apostolic age, like the miracles of healing and resurrection wrought by our Lord and his disciples, . . . but one of present and every-day occurrence, it has a more practical and immediate value in dealing with objectors than any which can be employed."

It is generally implied in the discussion of

miracles that all miracles were wrought by the operation of supernatural force over natural law, and so were limited to the material universe as their arena. But it must be remembered that the inspired records inform us that Christ, not only in the judgment of his contemporaries, but by his own confession, cast out demons from those who were afflicted with them, and the expulsion of evil spirits was not the least of miracles. This was the operation of Spirit over spirits. When, therefore, the Holy Spirit of God changes the carnal heart, renews the human spirit, casts out the evil passions, appetites and affections that have been dominant in the soul, and makes a man morally and spiritually sane, "in his right mind," in his normal condition as a child of God, with the holy loves and desires of a new heart and the abounding fruits of the divine Spirit, such a work is akin to the casting out of demons. The apostle Paul declared to the Christians at Ephesus that in time past they all walked "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

In these days, when men are denying the fact

of the supernatural in the face of the manifestation of God in revelation and in history, or are explaining it away by some new and vapory and unnatural definition of "the natural," it is not any wonder that regeneration and conversion are made light of, and are reduced to natural processes, from which the distinct activity of the sovereign Spirit of God has been eliminated. We need a new exaltation and honoring of the Holy Spirit, who is immanent in nature and at the same time transcendent above nature, of gracious and sovereign power, as well as of distinct and recognizable activity, whose office it is to "convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment," and "to take of the things of Christ and show them unto men." We need to make a fresh and prayerful study of the language of Jesus Christ—"The Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit," and "Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." We need this to save us from the threatened denial of a personal supreme Deity who is "God over all, blessed

for evermore," and from a subtle species of Pantheism which is creeping into Christian churches and pulpits. We need it in order that our churches may realize again and constantly their dependence upon the Holy Spirit, under whose dispensation we now live, for all genuine increase and prosperity. We need it in order that we may recognize anew the presence and special gracious activity of the divine Spirit in every conversion, whether of child or adult, of moralist or profligate.

It is because of this characteristic of every Christian experience, viz.: that it is born of the Spirit of God, and is nourished and strengthened and enriched by revealed truth, that it bears indisputable witness to the divine character of Christianity. Christian experience becomes a homogeneous part of a supernatural system. Men may never have the great privilege of beholding a miracle in the material world, a man born blind seeing, a deaf man hearing, a leper cleansed by a touch, a dead man raised to life by a word; but they may themselves be miracles. The old physical miracles seemed to fulfil their mission and come to an end. We live now under a new and

higher order of supernatural dispensation, the dispensation of Christian experience, of renewed hearts and lives that have been healed of spiritual blindness, and deafness, and leprosy, and quickened into a new and godly life. What else did Christ mean when he said: "And greater works than these shall you do, because I go unto my Father"? There are no greater physical miracles than those which Christ wrought. The "greater works" must be in the spiritual realm. The coming of the Spirit, with renewing and transforming power, was dependent, Christ said, upon his departure. In fulfilment of his promise, the Spirit came, and his presence and activity are the abiding possession of the Church.

In unfolding more particularly the bearing of the evidence of Christian experience upon the divine nature of the Christian religion, it may be remarked:

First, that the Bible presents an accurate picture of human nature. Nowhere else in the whole range of literature is the nature of man so vividly and truthfully portrayed. When men unaided have undertaken to draw the human portrait, it has always been partial, par-

tisan, incomplete and false. But in the Bible it appears in all its dignity and possibility, and in all its weakness and shame and need. Man came from the hand of God, made in his likeness. He fell into sin, and the effects of sin upon his relation to his Maker and to his fellow-man, and upon himself, entailing moral weakness and blindness and corrupt tendency, are all set forth. Thoughtful men have ever acknowledged that the picture was taken from life, and that the artist was divine. It was Coleridge, that philosopher of rare spiritual insight, who confessed: "I know the Bible is inspired, because it finds me at greater depths of my being than any other book." All other books failed to penetrate into the recesses of his nature. Their light shed its rays only a little way below the surface of the turbid stream of being. The Bible shot its rays down to the bottom, revealing its complex motives, its subtle workings, its evil tendencies, its secret faults and its inherent needs.

It was the command of the Greek philosophy: "O man, know thyself!" But with all its wisdom, it left him powerless to obey. The Bible says: "The heart is deceitful above all things,

and desperately wicked; who can know it"? The implication is that all human attempts to solve the mystery of evil in the soul are futile. But God's Word holds up to every man the reflected image of his true self. "It is quick and powerful," we are told, "and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Self-knowledge lies at the basis of all religion. It is the first step towards the knowledge of God. No man ought to be willing to live for a single hour in a state of self-deception, if the truth is knowable. Such is the mystery of the soul, its blindness, its conscious or unconscious deceit, its hidden depths, that only God can know it, and only God can reveal it. The Bible is as much a revelation of man as of God. The enlightened experience bears out the truthfulness of the divine description of the moral condition of the race.

Secondly, Christian experience bears witness to the divine nature of Christianity in that it proves its perfect adaptability to human needs. The Bible not only discloses the con-

dition and wants of man's spiritual nature, but it is exactly suited to its condition, and abundantly satisfies its deepest wants. A few particulars only can be suggested.

Such is the nature of man, as affected by sin, that he needs, and must have, the impartation of a new principle of life, if he is ever to secure the goal of his being in a perfect manhood. This need is met by the offer of God's Spirit in regenerating power. A religion which should contain no new birth, and make provision for no radical change of purpose and of disposition, would not meet the necessities of human nature. All processes of ordinary education, all advance in civilization, all superficial reform, are utterly inadequate. To take from the Christian system the doctrine of a distinct regeneration would leave it suited perhaps to some other race of beings, but not to the race which we know and to which we belong. The needed new life must begin in the experienced new birth. The spirit of man, in order to be redeemed from the deadening influence of sin, must come under the direct operation of the quickening Spirit of God. Every person who has experienced a spiritual self-revelation has

found the words of the Psalmist the exact and fitting expression of his consciousness of need: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Christianity proves its divine sufficiency by recognizing this spontaneous prayer of the enlightened soul, and making provision for its answer. And Christian experience uniformly testifies to the reality of this inward new birth, which is, "not of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Moreover, Christianity shows itself to be of God and not of man, by its unique method of salvation. The cross of Calvary is the accepted symbol of the Christian faith. The Son of God, an innocent Sufferer, giving his life, the just for the unjust, whose death bore relation, on the one hand, to divine law, and on the other, to human guilt, is the basal and immovable truth of revelation, and answers to the deepest necessity of human nature. Any departure from this truth is not only a departure from the obvious teaching of the Word of God, but is a failure to answer the demands of a soul that has been enlightened and convicted of its moral condition. The cross is not only the expression of the wisdom and grace of God, but

is the fitting prescription for the moral sickness of man. It was determined as much by man's requirement as by God's ordainment. If its top points to the skies, its bottom is sunk deeply into the earth.

The words of the Scriptures, used to describe the atonement offered by Christ in behalf of men, are numerous and diverse. Perhaps no one of them expresses the whole thought of God in the sacrifice of his Son to be the world's Saviour. It may require all of them to set forth the nature of Christ's self-surrender and the redeeming love of the Heavenly Father; and even then our conception of it may be all too weak and imperfect. Some students may fix their gaze upon one term, and others upon another, and in that way human views of the mysterious divine reality may appear divergent, not to say antagonistic. All figures and all forms of expression are to be accepted, and interpreted in their obvious meaning, with the assurance that where man sees apparent discord, God sees eternal harmony.

"For the love of God is broader
  Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
  Is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple,
We should take him at his word;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord."

It is to be deplored that much of the theology of to-day is not exegetical or in any sense Biblical, but rather philosophical and speculative. Whole volumes of theology are written, with scarcely a quotation from the Word of God, unless it be made for the purpose of explaining away its obvious meaning. But the saving truths of the Bible, clothed in the language of inspiration, are adapted to the felt necessities of the soul, and the sinning nature of man will never be satisfied with any philosophical scheme of salvation which ignores the pregnant and sacred language of Scripture, the chosen nomenclature of the Spirit of God, and which does not freely use, and candidly interpret, the words that describe the holy office and redemptive work of Christ, for example, "ransom," "mediator," "sacrifice," "propitiation," "made a curse," "made to be sin for us," "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and such like words —words with Jewish coloring, indeed, but

which find a response in the universal heart, and which cannot be discarded without weakening the power or destroying the identity of the saving message itself. Not speculation, but interpretation, the soul demands, and it will not long be deceived into a false peace, if the truth which God has provided for it and which it craves, is withheld from it.

The sacrificial and mediatorial love of Christ satisfies the penitent heart of man as nothing else can, and is rooted forever in Christian experience. The confession of faith on earth is: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace"; and the confession of faith in heaven evermore will be: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Again, Christianity proves its divine adaptation to human need, and therefore its divine origin, by its offer of a living Christ to the believing soul. If faith in the crucified Christ imparts to the mind the peace of the divine forgiveness and restored fellowship with God,

faith in a present Christ as companion and friend, example and guide, counsellor and support, is necessary to impart strength and courage and patience amid all the trials and vicissitudes of life. The work of Christ in his brief visible manifestation is gloriously supplemented by his perpetual sympathy and unceasing activity and aid, extended to all his followers. Christ has promised to take the disciple into personal union and communion with himself, to impart unto him his own life, that he may bear fruit abundantly, to feed and protect him as a good shepherd feeds and protects his sheep, to share with him his peace and his joy, and even his glory, which is moral likeness to the Father, to pray for him that he may be kept from the evil of the world, to provide with every temptation a way of escape, to cause all things to work together for his good, to sanctify to him his deepest distress, to be with him even to the end of the world, and then, when he has possessed, strengthened, guided, comforted, protected and sanctified him, to come again and take him unto himself forever.

As human conditions bear perpetual witness to the need of such a living and sympathizing

and almighty Saviour, so Christian experience in the midst of the sorrows and the hardships of life, the temptations of the world, the extremities not infrequent to us all, and even in the fires of martyrdom, gives its abundant testimony to the fulfilment of these gracious divine promises. Many a heart has cried out in these troubled years: I know the Bible is true and is from God, because of what it has done and has been to me. It has been my comfort in sorrow, my strength in weakness and temptation, and my song in the midnight of my grief and loss. It has put a silver lining into every cloud that has hung low and dark upon my pathway, and has mingled much of sweetness in every bitter cup.

Indeed, such is the present blessing of Christianity, that prophets and philosophers, philanthropists and poets have found the cure of all earthly ills in the universal coming of Christ to the souls of men and the universal prevalence of the Christian religion.

"Some day our homeless cries will draw thee down,
And the old brightness on the ways of men
Will send a hush upon the jangling town,
And broken hearts will learn to love again.

'Earth will go back to her lost youth,
And life grow deep and wonderful as truth,
When the wise King out of the nearing heaven comes
To break the spell of long millenniums;
To build with song again
The broken hopes of men;
To hush and heroize the world
Beneath the flag of brotherhood unfurled.
And he will come some day;
Already is his star upon the way,
He comes, O world, he comes!"

And, finally, the Bible is its own unanswerable witness, and proclaims its own divinity, in that it meets the deepest need of the soul by opening the gates of the future, and giving to men the authoritative assurance of a life beyond this. Immortality is the supreme message of Christianity, and its supreme glory as a supernatural religion. Elsewhere are conjectures, intimations, unanswered longings; here is the certainty of a positive revelation. The old question, as old as the human race, is forever asking itself: "If a man die, shall he live again"? A brilliant infidel of our day makes this reply, the only reply which the rejector of the Bible can make:

"And yet we question, dream, and guess,
But knowledge we do not possess.

We ask, yet nothing seems to know;
We cry in vain,
There is no 'master of the show'
Who will explain,
Or from the future tear the mask;
And yet we dream and still we ask.

Is there beyond the silent night
An endless day?
Is death a door that leads to light?
We cannot say.
The tongueless secret locked in fate
We do not know; we hope and wait,
That is all."

Yes, that is all the answer that a man without a Bible has been able to give to the old heartrending question of the ages. It has never been fully, satisfactorily and unequivocably answered outside of the Holy Scriptures of our faith. It is here that we read that "Christ came to bring life and immortality to light in the Gospel;" "Because I live ye shall live also"; "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"; "I am the resurrection and the life"; "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so (if there were no hereafter, no life beyond this, no eternal home of the soul, if such a dire calamity awaited you), I would have told you."

A religion which offered no blessed and certain hope of immortality to men would be as empty and unsatisfying as a religion without God. Yet there are men to-day, even in our seats of learning, who turn away from the clear and positive revelation which God has given and authenticated in so many ways to an intelligent faith, and who, after nineteen hundred years of Christianity, are groping after God and religion and immortality. With blindfolded eyes they put themselves back into the times of Plato and Socrates and Cicero, and labor to find some scientific basis for spiritual realities. Let them open their ears, for God has certainly spoken to men, and it is no credit to any man to doubt when the Son of God has been on the witness stand. Let them open their eyes, for Christianity has been in the world for nineteen centuries, and countless myriads of followers have peacefully pillowed their dying heads upon its unfailing promises, have found its immortal hope converted into the unyielding anchor of the soul which reaches into the unseen, and have said farewell to earth and friends, and crossed the invisible threshold of another world, chanting as they went: "I

know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," "Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

Christian experience, then, adds its irresistible evidence in support of the claims of the Word of God, and the divinely prearranged adaptability of the Gospel to the needs of the soul. It calls upon men everywhere to make the experiment for themselves, and see if these things are not so. This evidence is individual, and at the same time collective and cumulative. President Robinson has well said of the character and weight of this evidence: "Individuals, multiplying and uniting in their testimonies through successive generations, make public proclamation to all human intelligence. Countless millions of these testimonies, rolling up through all the Christian centuries into the vast volume of Christian literature, constitute an array of evidence in behalf of the divine origin of Christianity which unbelief cannot on any plea set aside."

An experience of the truth is evermore necessary to the highest efficiency in the Christian

ministry. The candidate for ordination must first give an account of his conversion before he presents his views of Christian doctrine. "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life . . . declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us." A faith born of personal experience will kindle like faith in the hearts of men. It is undoubtedly true that much of the Biblical discussion of the present day is along lines unfamiliar to the ordinary Christian. But the continued sovereignty of the Word of God depends, not upon the skill of the apologists, but upon the vital experience of the present and coming generations. The fate of the Bible is not in the hands of its crit, ics, but of those who shall believe and illustrate its regenerating and sanctifying truths.

THE EVIDENCE FROM THE TRIUMPHS OF CHRISTIANITY

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28: 18-20.)

CHAPTER VI.

THE EVIDENCE FROM THE TRIUMPHS OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE astonishing nature of Christ's final commission to his disciples has often been the subject of remark. We have but to consider the circumstances in which the commission was given, its purpose and scope, and the confident tone in which it was uttered, together with the immense and seemingly insuperable obstacles in the way of its successful fulfilment, to be impressed with the sublime faith which Christ had in the divine nature of that system of truth which is contained in the Bible, and which we now denominate Christianity, and the infinite resources of power, which would accompany its proclamation in the world. Among the Christian evidences, evidences which are adduced to establish the divine claims of the Bible and its message, the early triumphs of the Christian faith and the later progress of the Gospel hold a prominent place.

The late Dr. Richard S. Storrs, in his able Lowell Lectures, entitled "The Supernatural Origin of Christianity, indicated by its Historical Effects," says: "No other question can be to us of superior importance, as matched against the question whether the religion of that New Testament, which is our inheritance, has come to us from God, or is the product of human logic, conjecture or legend." The tests which Christ authorized his disciples to apply to other teachers and other doctrines are to be applied no less rigidly to himself and his system of truth. "By their fruits you shall know them." It is a legitimate inquiry, what has Christianity accomplished, what have been its progress and influence in the world, what its effects upon social life and national development, that go to prove the divine character of the Sacred Scriptures and the message of truth embodied in them?

It is not forgotten that the great commission, "Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations," was given, according to the records, after the death of Christ, and to a little handful of weak, uninfluential, disappointed and discouraged disciples. They might have exclaimed, who are

we, that we should undertake to preach the Gospel to the whole world with any hope of a successful issue? And they certainly would have thus exclaimed, and been led by their fears to inactivity and disobedience, had it not been for one thing, viz.: the Christ who gave them commission had risen from the dead, and claimed to possess all power in heaven and in earth. Humanly speaking, taking into the account simply the number of the disciples, their humble character, without learning, or social position, or political influence, and their visible resources, which were *nil,* to go forth on that commission was to go forth to utter failure and shameful rout. If the disciples of Christ had any success at all, it would be ample evidence that the power of God was in the message, and behind the message, that the message and the success were not of men, but of God.

Then, too, the obstacles must have seemed well-nigh insurmountable. In no quarter, and among no known people, was there the slightest basis of hope that their effort to spread the new religion would meet with any encouraging results. The Jews, the nation to which Christ and his first disciples belonged, had just put

Christ to death with the permission and aid of the Roman power, to which they were unwillingly subject. Jewish prejudice and Jewish hate had already manifested themselves in no uncertain way. The essential doctrines of Christianity were most offensive to all classes, Scribes, Pharisees and common people. They militated against their sacred beliefs and their most cherished expectations. There was nothing in Judaism, as apprehended by the people in the days of the apostles, that prepared the way for the ready acceptance of Christianity. It called for the repudiation of national traditions and hopes, the abandonment of forms of worship, which were hallowed by the use of centuries, and the acceptance of a crucified malefactor as their foretold Messiah, instead of coming into possession of a restored kingdom, presided over by a mighty Prince, glorious in his person and glorious in his reign. "To the Jews a stumbling-block."

To say that in Judaism there were forces at work which naturally evolved into spiritual Christianity without a special divine interposition and a new revelation of supernatural power and grace, is to say what no reasonable student

of the condition of things can justify. Judaism resisted and fought the entrance and progress of Christianity by every means in its power, by the persistent persecution and slaughter of its followers. "Christ came to his own, and his own received him not." They treated the disciple as they did the Master, as he prophesied they would. Again and again, the first apostolic appeal was made to the Jews, only to be repulsed, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles, hoping to find an open ear and a responsive heart. Moreover, the spirit of intense hatred and blind fanaticism of the whole Jewish people has survived for nineteen centuries, and lives to-day, notwithstanding the attempt of a Jewish Rabbi here and there to exonerate his ancestors from the crime of crucifying the Son of God, and to lay the responsibility upon the Roman Government. "To the Jews [still] a stumbling-block."

And "to the Greeks foolishness." Greek culture and philosophy, the fickleness of mind, which was characteristic of the nation, its absorbing worldiness and gaiety, its love and passion for art, and physical as over against moral beauty, these were as great barriers to the prog-

ress of Christianity as Jewish hate and prejudice. Among the Greeks, as Frederick W. Robertson has said: "Religion degenerated into the arts. All the immortal powers of man were thrown upon the production of a work of the imagination. The artist who had achieved a beautiful statue was almost worshipped. The poet who had produced a noble poem was the prophet of the nation. The man who gave the richest strains of melody was half divine. The arts became religion, and religion ended in the arts."

Paul found classic Athens wholly given to idolatry. It was a proverb that the city contained as many idol statues as men. A principal value of their belief in the gods was the opportunity it furnished for the display of their artistic taste and skill. Every new god must have a new altar, and so they erected one to "the unknown god," when they had exhausted the list of their known deities. For once agnosticism produced something. But amid it all, life was superficial, frivolous, sensual, without seriousness, without moral purpose, without faith in the great spiritual realities of this life or of the next. When Paul, the earnestness

and nobility of whose spirit were in striking contrast with their frivolousness and sensuality, preached to them the doctrine of the resurrection, it is significantly said that they simply "mocked."

The most difficult people to-day to reach with the saving truths of the Gospel of Christ are those who are flippant and frivolous, whose lives are shallow and superficial, who make light of all things sacred, who never allow themselves to have any serious thoughts, who regard themselves with supercilious self-complacency, and devote their lives to the proud cultivation of their æsthetic nature and their literary tastes, to the neglect of their ethical and spiritual nature. These are the Greeks of modern society. They are an almost hopeless class, and they present now, as of old, an insuperable barrier to the progress of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Then there was the Roman nation, hard, material, made proud and cruel by its bloody conquests, jealous of its idolatrous faiths, and worshipping every symbol and personation of power, so that even its emperors were gods to be worshipped, whose supreme glory was found

in the captives dragged at their chariot wheels, and whose supreme pleasure was found in the heartrending spectacles of the bloody arena; a nation which, like Greece, was sunk in the dense darkness of heathenism, and in which every namable vice and immorality found unblushing indulgence, being sanctioned by the highest classes and supposed to be practised even by their gods themselves. Every evil passion had its deity, and the history of Roman life, private and public, is a record of moral rottenness, corruption, cruelty and insecurity, which has exhausted the power of language to describe. The few gleams of light reflecting domestic virtue and nobleness of character, shown in personal incident, or in mortuary inscription, only make the moral darkness more visible and appalling. Matthew Arnold is guilty of no poetic exaggeration in the lines:

"On that hard Pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell:
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.

In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
The Roman noble lay;
He drove abroad, in furious guise,
Along the Appian Way;

He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
And crowned his hair with flowers—
No easier nor no quicker pass'd
The impracticable hours."

And Gibbon has truly said: "Every virtue and every vice acquired its deity, . . . the freedom of the city was bestowed on all the gods of mankind, . . . almost every reign is closed with the same disgusting repetition of treason and murder." The names of Tiberius, Caligula and Nero simply disclose what heights of inhumanity and what depths of depravity were possible in such a state of society. What else could be expected than that the disciples of Christ, unresisting men and delicate women, would be

"Butchered to make a Roman holiday."

All this is but a faint picture of the superstitions, the hoary religious faiths, the hatreds, the cruelties, the immoralities, the rooted vices which confonted the little company of Christ's disciples as they set out for their world-wide conquest. The obstacles were indiscribably formidable and disheartening. What made their case still more hopeless among the Gentile

nations was the fact that they would be regarded as a sect of the Jewish race, who were everywhere despised, persecuted, banished or slain. Their obstinate refusal to join in the heathen worship, their denunciation of the popular religion and of all forms of prevailing wickedness, and in addition their connection with a most obnoxious and hated race exposed them at all times to the fury of the populace and the unbridled cruelty of the Government. The old cry which greeted their Master, "Crucify him," was now changed to the no less cruel and successful shout, "The Christians to the lions"!

Nevertheless, Christianity made headway against all these hostile and destructive forces, "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," and not only made headway against them, but in the short space of three centuries it was victor over them. It changed largely the whole moral and social condition of things, and actually enthroned itself in the palace of the Cæsars.

It grappled with Judaism, preserving all that was best in its religious faith, and convert-

ing out of it those who had been fierce persecutors into heroic and self-denying apostles and founders of Christian churches. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and his splendid life of service and suffering which followed that miraculous event, establish the reality and the divinity of the Christian religion beyond a question. Christianity met Greece, and seized its finely wrought language, which was the expression of its culture and its philosophy, and made it the vehicle of its own higher spiritual truths to all nations and to the end of time. Christianity met Rome, and not only conquered its victorious eagles, but made them the heralds of its divine Dove to the remotest bounds of the empire, transforming its laws, its institutions and its customs, and sending a purifying and saving leaven into the whole lump of social and family life and of civil government. Whereas, one of its emperors once inaugurated the persecutions of Christians, and mercilessly saw them burn as torch-lights in his palace gardens; in three centuries another presided in state at great church councils, and ruled over an empire which was nominally Christian, and into whose organic life the institutions of the Chris-

tian religion had been vitally and forever incorporated. It had achieved not only the improbable but the impossible. Apparent weakness had triumphed over invincible strength. The royal lad had not only brought the opposing giant to the ground with the little stone and sling, but he had made him his willing and obedient servant.

What but the mighty power of God, inherent in the truth of Christianity and accompanying its proclamation, could have overcome such tremendous obstacles, and accomplished such marvellous results? It is not too much to say that the early and rapid triumphs of the Christian religion, and its victories over prejudice, hatred, superstition, heathenism and universal corruption, can be accounted for only upon the supposition that it is from God, that its truth constitutes a divine revelation whose proclamation, in obedience to Christ's commission, was attended with the power of his almighty Spirit.

The progress of Christianity among the barbarous, pagan peoples of central and northern Europe, and the introduction of a Christian civilization, was a victory hardly less marvellous and significant than that which has just

been described. It is not necessary to dwell upon this new advance in detail. It is enough to say in the language of another: "From its Syrian cradle the Gospel spread eastward through Asia, southward to Africa, and across the Hellespont into Europe. In 1054, when the great schism between the Roman and eastern churches was finally consummated, Europe was virtually a Christian continent." Goths, Huns, Franks, Celts, Saxons, Slavs, had all been brought under the power of Christian truth, through the efforts of devoted missionaries, had abandoned their pagan beliefs, their sacrificial rites and their barbarous customs, and nominally at least were worshippers of the true God and believers in the doctrines of his Word, and were showing to a greater or less degree the fruits of their new religion.

It is not forgotten that the union of the Christian Church with the temporal power in the person of the Emperor Constantine was an unspeakable calamity and a serious departure from the teachings of its divine Founder, damaging to its purity, its power and its spiritual life. The history of the Christian centuries would have been vastly different if the Church

had sought only the kingship of Christ, and employed only spiritual weapons in its warfare and spiritual methods in its aggressive movements. It continued to increase, indeed, in numbers and in a certain kind of influence, and exercised like power with worldly rulers in the councils and intrigues of European nations, but it lost its simplicity, its likeness to Jesus Christ, its sense of dependence upon the Spirit of God, and alas! its moral purity. Great, abominable and soul-destroying errors and superstitions crept into it, a mixture of Judaism and Paganism, and also a love of pomp and display, honors and powers. Grievous oppressions were multiplied, so that religion came to be a yoke too burdensome to be endured by the liberty-loving spirit of man; and still further unholy rivalries and nameless sins became common and notorious among those shepherds who should have been examples to the flock. It was true of the Church of God that there was "spiritual wickedness in high places."

It is not questioned that there were good men in the Roman Catholic Church, who were godly and spiritual in spite of dangerous formalism, prevailing error and gross wickedness,

nor that the Church did a valuable service in copying and preserving the Sacred Scriptures, though it would have done a far more valuable service if, instead of keeping the Bible bound in chains, it had given it freely to the people as their rightful heritage from God, and written its truths not simply on dead parchments, but in illuminated letters in the lives of both people and priests. Those have been truly called "the dark ages" in the history of Christian Europe, ages in which the light of the glory of God as revealed in Jesus Christ was obscured by empty forms, deceitful errors, grievous oppressions and shocking indulgences. The Church was indeed "in the wilderness," and the fair form of truth was crushed to earth, and buried beneath the rubbish of multiplied dogmas, for which the Scriptures give no warrant, and useless sacraments to which saving efficacy was attached, rather than to simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But "truth crushed to earth will rise again"; and so it did under the mighty reformations of the sixteenth century. There is no stronger evidence of the divinity of the Christian faith and the supernatural origin of the Word of

God than its ability to burst the heavy chains which had bound it for centuries, to shake itself clear from superstitions and errors which had fastened themselves upon it, and apparently incorporated themselves into it, and to reassert itself in its purity, simplicity and spiritual power. If men shall ever again overburden the Christian faith with falsehoods and human inventions, or shall ever drift away from the essential truths of revelation, as some men and churches seem to be doing to-day, it has in it the power of a divine recovery. God will see to it that there is a new reformation, when the faiths of men will be called back to the simple, unencumbered and unadulterated truth of the Word of God.

It should be said in this connection, what is too often forgotten, that the reformation of the sixteenth century was an incalculable blessing to the Roman Catholic Church, and saved it by its reforming influence, penetrating within the Church, from a complete and absolute repudiation by the advancing intelligence of European nations. It could not wholly escape the mighty, far-reaching influence of the Renaissance. It can never again be as it was before,

so sunk in error and corruption, and so regardless of the rights of conscience and the claims of personal freedom and intelligent manhood. Especially in lands where Protestantism has made its beneficent influence widely felt, Romanism is compelled wisely to adapt itself to the changed conditions of fuller light and liberty and unfettered thought.

For two centuries after the Reformation the history of Christianity was not marked by wide aggressive movements. Here and there advances were attempted, which were the forerunners of modern missions, but Protestant Christendom was largely occupied in working out to their legitimate conclusions the religious forces and principles which gave it birth. It may be said that the most logical result of the Reformation was the settlement of America, and the founding in this new world of a Republic, based upon the principles of civil and religious liberty. This free Republic is the maturest and divinest offspring of the Protestant Reformation, and the ripest fruit of the spiritual seed contained in the Word of God, and may be said to be an indisputable evidence of the divine origin of that religious faith which

impelled and guided its founders. This loftiest conception of human life and government upon earth, which is the product of New Testament teaching, viz.: a free Church, endowed with spiritual life in a free State, built upon human brotherhood and the rights of the individual conscience, bears upon it the stamp of its divine paternity.

During the last century, however, Christianity has been making wonderful strides, and has achieved results which bear fresh and unmistakable testimony to its character and power. This has been pre-eminently the century of missionary effort, and the progress of Christianity has far exceeded the progress in the centuries immediately subsequent to the days of the Apostles. At the end of the first century of the Christian era, it is estimated by Professor Shem and other careful statisticians that there were 500,000 Christians. At the end of the fifth century the figures had advanced to 15,000,000. At the end of the fifteenth century, after ten centuries more had elapsed, or at the time of the Reformation, there were 100,000,000. From the fifteenth to the eighteenth century the number was doubled, mak-

ing 200,000,000. But during the single century which has just closed, it is calculated that 300,000,000 have been added to the number of Christians, making the present number 500,000,000. In other words, in this remarkable century the number of Christians has increased two and a half fold. Three times as many have been added as during the previous three centuries, more than twenty times as many as during the first five centuries, and six hundred times as many as during the first century of the Christian era. Of course, these figures include nominal as well as real Christians.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the great continents of Asia and Africa were almost entirely closed against Christianity. Now the whole world, with its 1,500,000,000 inhabitants, is practically open to the entrance of the Gospel, with the single exception of the country of Thibet. China, Japan, India and Africa are being traversed by the feet of Christian missionaries, and their vast territories are being dotted with churches of Jesus Christ and with Christian schools, while the great centers of population are being taken possession of by the followers of our Lord, and supplied with

Colleges and Theological Seminaries for the higher education of the on-coming generation and the training of a native ministry. Christian thought has been diffusing itself throughout heathen lands, changing ancient and sacred customs, and so transforming social conditions that intelligent Indians have been led to confess that it is no longer Buddha who rules in India, but Jesus Christ.

Some of the islands of the sea have been practically evangelized, notably the Hawaiian group, from which foreign missionary effort has been withdrawn, and the people have been left to complete the work of Christianization with their own agencies and resources. The inhabitants of other islands have been converted from the most degraded barbarism and cannibalism to civilized and peaceable populations, among whom Christian morality and charity prevail, and Christian institutions are observed as generally as in the oldest Christian communities. Two-thirds of the territory of Africa are now under the control of Christian governments, and not far from 900,000,000 of the inhabitants of the globe, or nearly sixty-seven per cent. of the earth's population, have

been brought under the sway of Christian nations.

It should be added that the Holy Scriptures of our faith, which have furnished the motive and the command for this immense work of evangelization and moral enlightenment, have now been translated, entirely or in part, into more than four hundred languages and dialects, so that almost every people and tribe on the face of the whole earth can now hear the Gospel of peace and eternal salvation in their own tongue wherein they were born. This is but the barest outline of the marvellous progress of Christianity, which bears abundant witness to its victorious power over apparently insurmountable obstacles, and its ability in the hands of obedient and devoted adherents to push on its conquests to complete victory, until the great prophetic declarations, which are an inherent and inseparable part of itself, shall be fulfilled, and "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ," and he shall reign "King of kings and Lord of lords forever and ever."

But it is not the extent of the progress or the number of nominal adherents to Christian-

ity that constitutes the peculiar and striking evidence of its divine origin and the superhuman character of its message, but it is the nature of the progress which it has made, as seen in the condition of the peoples and the lands which it has most completely conquered to itself. We do not forget that Buddhism can reckon its adherents by hundreds of millions, as well as Christianity, and that Mohammedanism still holds dominion over vast populations in Europe, and Asia and Africa who have been conquered by its sword. Mere numbers of followers are not conclusive evidence of the divinity of a religious system. The Koran and the Vedas are not proved to be from God by the multitudes of cruel and immoral followers who worship in the mosques of the one, or the multitudes of ignorant and degraded devotees who bow in the pagodas of the other. A religious system must be tested by its moral and spiritual teachings, by the quality of the fruits which it produces, by the character of the conquests which it makes.

Judged by these tests, Christianity stands conspicuous and alone as a religious system worthy to have come from God, giving evi-

dence of the inspiration and activity of the Holy Spirit in its unfolding, and yielding fruits which have upon them the impress of the Divine; which are not the natural fruits of a universally degenerate nature but the fruits of a regenerating Spirit; not the fruits of an evolutionary process, but the fruits of a divine interposition and an imparted new life.

Only the briefest presentation can be given of this supremely important subject as bearing upon the supernatural character of the Christian revelation. The influence of the Bible, when it has been received as the Word of God, has been manifested in the regenerated lives of men, in their purified and refined homes, in their improved social conditions; in a word, in the advanced civilization which we are wont to denominate Christian. Men sometimes talk thoughtlessly about the effects of our modern civilization, as if to it could be ascribed the light, the progress, the superior advantages of our time. But civilization never produced anything, and never can produce anything. It is itself a product, and not an originating force, an effect and not a cause. It is but the aggregation of the results of forces which have been

at work in human society. The primary, the transcendent force which has been working to produce the advanced civilization, of which we boast, in nominally Christian nations, has been the religion of Jesus Christ embodied in the Word of God. That is the reason why it is spoken of significantly as a Christian civilization. It is because Christianity has given birth to it, and has in some recognized degree moulded and guided it by the inculcation and infusion of Christian principles and motives. That which has produced the almost measureless difference between life in America and life in Africa, between life in England and life in China, has been the dynamic power of the Bible, with its inspired doctrines of God and righteousness, of life and duty, of faith and immortality, and with its historic Christ, authoritative teacher, perfect example and Almighty Saviour, in whom the revelation of the Bible culminated. It is this that has made it possible to say:

"Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."

Mr. W. T. Stead has truly said: "The triumph of Christianity is indeed a great mir-

acle, even if the whole of the Gospel story be accepted as Gospel truth; but if there be nothing behind it excepting chance, or 'the play of purely casual circumstance,' then, indeed, we are face to face with a still more marvellous miracle than anything which staggers the faith in the Scripture record."

It need not be claimed that everything that distinguishes Christian lands can be traced directly to the influence of the Word of God, and the activity of believers in Christ, that there have not been other forces and agencies at work which have helped on the progress and brought it to its present high stage of development. But it must be admitted by every thoughtful mind that the Bible, and its sublime ethical and spiritual truths, have put their impress upon the best life of to-day, and more than anything else, ay, vastly more than all things else, have made it what it is. In spite of all the defects and corruption of nominally Christian society, of the institutions and practices and conditions of modern Christendom, and in spite of all the imperfections and failures in Christian character and life, there is enough that is worthy and superior, commendable and Christ-like,

distinguishing us from unchristian communities and indicative of great and permanent progress, to exalt the influence of Christianity, and to crown with unspeakable glory the religious teaching of the Bible. Indeed, to the glory of the Sacred Scriptures be it said that the sins, defects and failures of our so-called Christian civilization are never ascribed, by the most thoughtless and malicious, to Christianity, but rather to a depravity of nature not yet overcome by Christian teaching, and to social conditions not yet brought completely under the sway of the religion of Christ. By universal consent, when men and society and human government, when life in all its relations, shall be under the supreme control of the truth of Revelation, then all things that mar the beauty of our present condition, destroy its peace and its purity, and hinder its perfection, will completely and forever disappear.

The progress of Christianity which bears witness to its divine origin and power may be said to lie in three parallel and coexistent lines.

First, the general enlightenment of the people. Christian nations have been distinguished, and by Christian nations is meant nations

whose conception of Christianity has been taken from an open Bible, and has been spiritual and correct, by the general diffusion of knowledge and the rapid multiplication of institutions of learning. It is true in every sense, to use the words of the Psalmist, that "the entrance of thy words giveth light." A love for all truth, a broader intelligence, a more exalted mental life, the prevalence of educational advantages have accompanied the acceptance of the Bible as the Book of religious faith among the people. The arts, the sciences and all good learning have flourished in Christian lands; indeed, they have existed nowhere else. The religion of Christ uniformly kindles to a glow the intellectual life of communities, and ignorance and superstitition flee like bats from its brightness. The sad condition of Italy, Spain, Ireland and Mexico, and the general illiteracy and degradation of the people in those countries, only emphasize the fact that it is the supremacy of the Book that gives enlightenment, and not the supremacy of the Church, however mighty its influence and ornate its service, which chains the Book and withholds it from the people.

Secondly, the progress is seen in the higher moral tone in Christian communities. Much as we deplore the ethical shortcomings of our time in individual and social life, in political and commercial life, the life of to-day is lived on a higher moral plane than ever before, and is in striking contrast with the low life of communities where the Gospel of Christ has never penetrated with purifying and elevating power. Under the lofty Christian standards, the perfect moral ideals of the Bible, if sin is committed, if crime is perpetrated, if immorality and corruption exist, it arouses universal moral condemnation. If a man is guilty of an offence against the purity of the home and the sanctity of the marriage tie, the whole nation rises in indignant protest against his wearing civil honors or having aught to do with the administration of public affairs. The question is not, does sin exist in Christian communities, for human nature is weak and far from being sanctified, and there are still masses of the social lump that are not permeated by the moral leaven; but how is it treated when it is discovered? Is it defended and condoned, or is it rebuked and condemned? This is the test of the

moral sentiment of a community, and shows whether its standards are heaven-born or earth-born. Under the teachings of the Bible the moral tone of society has steadily advanced, and the demands for personal and civic righteousness are becoming more and more imperative.

And thirdly, the progress of society under the influence of revealed religion is manifest in the marvellous development of charity and active philanthropy. If there is one thing above all others that distinguishes our Christian civilization, it is its system of organized help and relief for the needy and the unfortunate, which is fast approaching completeness. Hospitals, asylums for the aged, the blind, the orphaned, the destitute, the insane, the wayward, and those who are worse than homeless, these holy charities which are now so numerous and cover every form of human need and misery, but of which there were no traces in non-Christian countries, are the fruit of a religion created by the Bible, ay, more, are the jewels in its diadem, jewels found not in earthly mines, but in heaven, of whose love and sympathy and resplendent brightness they all partake.

In respect to such results of the acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God, viz.: the growing enlightenment of the people, the higher standards of personal and social life, and the systematic and expensive works of charity and love, Dr. Richard S. Storrs has well said: "If we find such, on a large scale, going everywhere with Christianity, continuing through the centuries, and giving promise of nobler eras yet to come, I think you will agree that it is not rash to ascribe such effects, with the system which brings them, to a Mind above man's, and to a Will working for our welfare."

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